

NEW STATESMAN

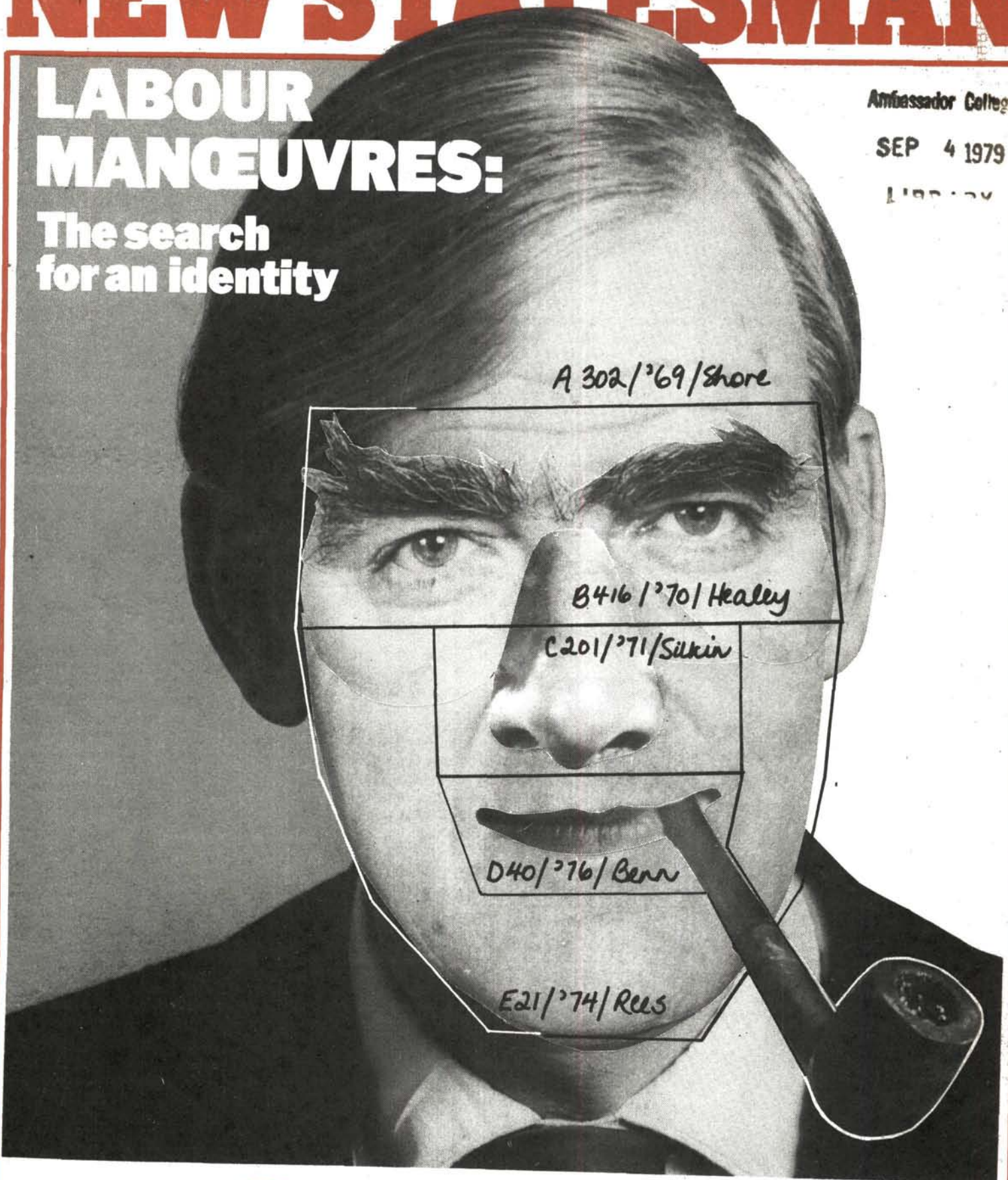
LABOUR MANŒUVRES:

The search
for an identity

Ambassador College

SEP 4 1979

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Vietnam: America's revenge

The cops and the tell-tale corpse/Tea & exploitation

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Peter Levi: Poetry and poets/Michael Kustow: French theatre

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A Visigoth on the loose?

ANY BRITISH GOVERNMENT has at its regular command, in Whitehall, one of the finest teams of professional illusionists in the world. Certain veterans of the Civil Service will explain, privately, that its real fault is not that it is inefficient, but that it *too efficiently* carries out a perverted version of the bureaucratic function. A minister takes office, committed to the idea that everything black shall be made white: provided he plays the game, his servants will provide him with some half-way convincing evidence that progress has been made in that direction. Duly, he is replaced by someone convinced that white should be made black. 'Certainly, Minister', say the civil servants: and because they are diligent and ingenious people, they do not fail wholly in either task. They produce, for either client, a grey tint of variable intensity. It is in itself a remarkable construct: though no closer, logically, to the intricate colourations of reality than the sharp-edged fantasies with which the politicians begin.

In Whitehall today, the same kind of talents that aided Denis Healey in trying to dress monetarist dogma as socialist realism are devoted to making out that Sir Keith Joseph is in possession of an industrial policy. The comparison is a little unfair to Labour, since few of its leaders were burdened with any mystic faith comparable to Sir Keith's capitalist fundamentalism (it may be doubted whether any other senior British politician would have been capable of putting his name to such a piece of ignorant claptrap as Joseph's *Equality*, analysed in the NS last week). Britain's real political system – an almost uncharted structure, in which the visible business of Parliament plays only the slightest of roles – will from now on be devoted to two apparently contradictory but in truth complementary purposes. One will be to prevent Sir Keith, as far as possible, from actually dismantling anything. The other will be to generate the necessary illusion that a Visigoth is on the loose.

A REDUCTION of £233 million in a regional budget of £609 million may be presented as raising Adam Smith from his grave. But

¹ This autumn, the publication of Keith Middlemas' *Politics in Industrial Society* (now in proof) should do something to dispel the cloud of unknowing.

NOTES

Old soldiers never die

Duncan Campbell writes: Surprisingly little comment has been made concerning the true nature of 'anti-kidnap' firms such as Control Risks Ltd, who earlier this month supervised the paying out of a £5 million ransom to El Salvador guerrillas in return for two executives of Lloyds Bank International. The enormous market in kidnap and ransom insurance provided in London, quite apart from encouraging and bankrolling terrorist organisations, has for some years provided a prestigious cover for mercenary and 'bodyguard' recruitment. It is little surprise that Lloyds' brokers and companies like Control Risks are prepared to blatantly defy Foreign Office policy on the payment of ransoms, for the same people have long been prepared to recruit ex-soldiers for private wars, and even to sell their services back to the Foreign Office itself as bodyguards for ambassadors and envoys.

Kidnap and ransom (K&R) insurance started to blossom in the early 1970s. One broking firm in particular, Hogg Robinson, dominates the market

as it has no effect until 1982-3, the earth will remain unperturbed. On Whitehall's time-scale, three years equals eternity. Meanwhile Sir Keith may well be promoted, converted – in his volatile fashion – to Marxism, or received into a monastery.

Beyond the carefully-deferred financial proposals, examination of Sir Keith's statement soon returns us to the land of gesture politics. 'In future regional assistance will be provided only where it is necessary to enable projects to go ahead' – British commerce employs numerous finance directors able to demonstrate that you cannot sell lifebelts to drowning men without government assistance. 'Particular attention will be paid to the provision of more productive and more secure jobs'. Absolutely.

This is not to deny that Joseph's gestures will have their mean and particular effects. The obliteration of experiments like Meriden fits into a general pattern which will accelerate the process of turning Britain into a dull and sleazy habitation for those outside the cocoon of minority privilege (also on Tuesday, Patrick Jenkin blandly agreed that cutting £100 million from the health budget would certainly damage the hospital service). But the central point is that even by Sir Keith's own deluded references, his proposals make no substantial impact upon the facts of Britain's industrial and economic decline.

Whatever the demands of short-term Parliamentary tactics, Labour should therefore avoid wasting too much energy on charades about Joseph the Wrecker. Serious mental effort should go into reflection upon the limitations of real – as against illusory – political action in Britain today: noting how little Sir Keith is actually able to do – even though his ambitions are negative and reactionary ones, while the positive and constructive aims to which Labour must aspire are intrinsically more difficult. In short, the effort must be not just to resist within terms of the present Parliamentary system but to investigate actively how far that system is adequate to Labour's purposes. There can be no worse nightmare, for those interested in progress, than the idea that Labour might return to office still unequipped to offer anything more than magic-lantern shows.

through a subsidiary called Investment Insurance International. Associated with the actual insurance business is a secretive subsidiary composed of specialist ex-soldiers, Control Risks. Clients for K&R policies are obliged to take advice from Control Risks on personal security, and hire as many bodyguards as necessary. It has become quite notorious; in 1977 two ex-SAS officers in its employ were jailed following the illegal payment of a £4m. ransom in Colombia. After its recent activities, the El Salvador government has declared that any foreign firm behaving similarly will have its assets sequestered.

Hogg Robinson's K&R business has been built up by a wealthy insurance broker with military aspirations, Julian Radcliffe. Control Risks was established with the assistance of an ex-SAS major, David Walker, who very quickly acquired a reputation as a mercenary recruiter for Arabia and elsewhere. He had formerly been employed as an SAS security specialist at British embassies in South America.

Walker now works for the other major firm



specialising in the K&R consultancy business, Saladin Security Ltd. This company is the public face of an ex-SAS recruiting organisation called Keeny Meeny Services (KMS). Until David Owen put a stop to their activities, KMS had succeeded in supplying ex-SAS bodyguards to the Foreign Office almost within hours of the same men leaving the army. Saladin Security, based in Sloane Street, London, now includes two ex-SAS commanding officers, as well as other ranks, among its staff. KMS/Saladin are well known to ex-soldiers as recruiters; their activities have raised fears that the SAS is being turned into a training ground for private armies.

Saladin Security is a subsidiary of another Lloyd's broker, Thomas Nelson. At least two other prominent brokers are handling a substantial amount of K&R business - Stewart Wrightson and Hartley Cooper. The companies are extremely sensitive about their involvement, aware of the charge that their activities encourage the payment of ransoms, and effectively finance terrorist groups. At Stewart Wrightson, the managing director was sufficiently imaginative to deny any involvement after their receptionist had enquired as to which area we wanted K&R insurance for.

Secrecy has intensified since the El Salvador incident. But there is no sign that the City brokers are ready to bow to international and Foreign Office feeling by cutting down on the business. With annual premiums for K&R and 'political risk' estimated to be at least £27m., scruples would be too expensive.

Ballscrews come and go

Patrick Wintour writes: Lucas Aerospace, who are currently receiving an £8 million grant provided by the last government in order to create jobs, now have the embarrassment of one of their former associate directors, Mr W. De Bloeme, entering a market which Lucas insist is unprofitable. Mr Bloeme has established a company called International Ballscrews, opening next year, which will manufacture industrial ballscrews in Barnstaple and will, if Sir Keith Joseph is agreeable, receive nearly a million pounds in regional development money. Lucas, by contrast, intend to close down their ballscrew factory in Hemel Hempstead. (Before Mary Whitehouse rushes to her typewriter, one should explain that ballscrews are devices for converting rotary force and motion to linear force and motion, and vice versa.)

De Bloeme left Lucas in 1975 and will hold the position of general manager in the new company,

which will have German financial and managerial backing as well as agents in Europe and Latin America. De Bloeme believes that the ballscrew market will boom with the increase in demand for numerically controlled machines, made possible by the microprocessor. Lucas's departure leaves only one other industrial ballscrew manufacturer in Britain.

The Lucas Aerospace Combine Committee, who have been campaigning to keep the Hemel Hempstead factory open since 1975, are obviously intrigued that a recently retired member of Lucas, who was specifically in charge of the ballscrew division, should take such a different view of the market from the Lucas management. De Bloeme has actually negotiated with Lucas to buy their plant, but Lucas stalled.

The combine committee prevented a previous attempt at closure in 1975 when they revealed that Lucas costing procedures classified aerospace and industrial ballscrews as the same product, thus overpricing the ballscrews. The Lucas management clearly wish to close the ballscrew division, regardless of its potential profitability, because it does not fit in with their current corporate strategy. The Lucas workers, for their part, are wondering why a government so generous in its provision of money to Lucas can be so weak in asking for anything in return.

Taking the food out of their mouths

Ruth Lister writes: The preservation of the school meals service may not be the most popular campaign for those with memories of soggy cabbage and peas. But the current proposals of the Association of County Councils to remove the statutory duty to provide a daily school meal which is suitable as the main meal of the day, are a real threat to the living standards of low income families. Even more worrying are press reports that the government itself has been considering the school meal as a target for its cuts.

Many low income families rely on the school meal to provide their children with a good main meal, and this is why they dread the school holidays. Last year 1,159,000 children received free school meals. In addition there are many thousands of low income families who just fail to qualify for free meals or who do not realise they are eligible, and who simply cannot afford to provide an adequate substitute for the school meal (price 30p from September) throughout the year. School meals are vital for the nutritional well-being of all these children. As the Committee on Catering in Schools reported in 1975 there are still 'children whose only adequate meal of the day is the one they get at school' and in the same year the Working Party on Nutritional Aspects of School Meals argued:

We do not think it is safe to assume that all children necessarily receive a satisfactory diet at home. We are especially concerned that all children should receive enough protein in school since any shortfall in protein in the midday meal might easily not be made up in other meals or snacks and drinks consumed outside school.

It also pointed out that 'some children may come to school with little or no breakfast'. The 1977 National Food Survey has highlighted the fact that on average families with three or more children were getting only 85 per cent of their recommended energy intake, which probably means that children in large low income families were getting considerably less. Nutritionists argue that even slight nutritional shortage can impair children's learning ability.

The ACC's proposals, which include the suggestion that the school day should run from 9 to 2.30 pm without a lunch break, also have serious implications for lone parents in employment and families where both parents go out to work. It could mean some mothers having to give up their jobs, which in turn would plunge even more families into poverty.

And, of course, school meals provide an important source of employment for mothers of school-age children. The destruction of the service would sit oddly with a Prime Minister who says hers is 'the Party of the family'.

Tories axe law centres

Ole Hansen writes: Three neighbourhood law centres were destined for closure this week in the Conservative-controlled London Borough of Wandsworth. Earlier in the year, another was forced to close by the newly-elected Tory council in Hillingdon. Since there are only 30 law centres in all, this means the country's network has been reduced by nearly 15 per cent. Others are likely to come under threat in the future.

Law centres are not closing because they are unsuccessful: their services are in great demand. Nor are they victims of unavoidable expenditure cuts, although this has been used as an excuse. They are in trouble because their work brings them into direct conflict with the local authorities who provide them with funds.

The centres provide free legal help, often to people who would otherwise not have access to the law at all. They are controlled by their local communities through elected management committees and they have developed techniques of working with groups in the community, so that the benefits of winning a case are not confined to a single litigant. Most of the centres are wholly or partly funded by local authorities, but at the same time, the authorities are major opponents in the courts, tribunals and inquiries where the centres represent the interests of local citizens. For instance, law centres may force local authorities to spend large sums in bringing accommodation up to standard by invoking public health legislation, or challenge their planning proposals and compulsory purchase orders. In Wandsworth, on the day before the council's Public Accountability Committee recommended that the centres' funds be cut, one of them had, by threats of legal action, wrung a concession out of the council which might cost it up to £120,000 in home loss payments to 300 tenants to whom it had previously refused even to give the necessary application forms.

One councillor in Hillingdon described the law centre there as a 'festering abscess on the left rump of the borough'. In Wandsworth, too, it rapidly became clear that the council objected to what it saw as 'political' activity by the centres, and wanted to stop the research and education work they were doing with community groups. Its Finance Committee recommended on Monday that funds be withdrawn from the three existing centres in the borough and a new service set up, centrally controlled by a council-nominated committee.

As long as local authorities play a major part in funding law centres crises of this kind will recur. In the last few years, the Lord Chancellor's Office has directed some money towards them, but only on an ad hoc basis and usually to bail out a centre which has had its funds withdrawn by a local authority; last year, it failed to spend £23,000 out of £335,000 budgeted for law centres. It was suggested to the Royal Commission on Legal Services that an autonomous body should be set up to channel funds to law centres. But the Commission looks set to recommend instead a 'Legal Services Council' without executive power or funds. It is difficult to see how this would safeguard the centres' ability to operate in the best interests of their clients, free from political interference, while they continue to depend financially on local authorities.

STEADMAN'S AMERICA

Because of delays in air freight, this week's cartoon by Ralph Steadman (who is in Los Angeles) did not arrive in time. Next week, however, Steadman's America will be revealed in all its horror and glory.

Don't bank on it

WHEN THE BANK of England was nationalised amid the self-congratulatory ululations of Dr Dalton, I think it was Roy Harrod who remarked that the transaction would probably result in a denationalisation of the Treasury. It is a pity he has not lived long enough to see his forecast vindicated. Under both Healey and Howe the Bank has clearly won the argument on most important economic issues. It now has a formidable economic staff which is clearly more than a match for the government, and a Governor who is abler and has a stronger personality than most, if not all, of his predecessors.

Does this mean that our economic destiny is at last in steady and knowing hands? Not a bit of it. The Bank, that is the Governor, has been taken in by Chicago's seductive wiles, and now seems unconditionally to accept the 'supply of money' as the main if not the sole

criterion of monetary management. The very concept of 'money stock' is totally arbitrary and has undergone startling changes. It can also be easily manipulated — by shifting funds to or from building societies or other financial institutions. The main indicator does not differentiate between individual and business deposits, both of which include convenience precautionary and savings deposits.

The hybrid concept of income velocity which the Bank dutifully if misleadingly publishes shows startling variations. It is certain that the immense inflow of foreign funds must have substantially slowed down the true velocity. Any attempt to press the money stock back to its pre-influx level, as the Governor proposes, would result in a strong deflationary force, unemployment and a fall in real income.

An influx of funds of the magnitude which we have experienced has little or nothing to do with the flow of demand and the supply of

goods. The policy of the Bank (as has been shown in 1977 and again more recently) is bound to have an adverse reaction on the level of domestic investment, even though investment and an increase in productivity are our only hopes of escaping from our present predicament. As a result of its anxiety about the money stock the Bank refused to stabilise the pound by increasing its reserves through purchases of foreign currencies, especially the dollar. The consequent soaring of sterling has much to do with the horrific foreign trade figures which show a vast deficit despite the bountiful yields of the North Sea.

In short, unless the influence of the Bank's monetarist prejudice is diminished soon, Britain's de-industrialisation is bound to continue, and we shall be faced in a few decades' time with a catastrophic worsening of our standard of life.

Thomas Balogh

CRIME Rob Rohrer

Merseyside death recalls the tragedy of Liddle Towers

Jimmy Kelly and the cops

THE DRUNKEN SONGS of Jimmy Kelly, as he staggered to his Huyton home on Merseyside four weeks ago, ensured at least that the last moments of his life did not go unobserved. From their windows local residents saw a white police car mount the pavement and head directly towards the swaying man as he crossed a narrow stretch of wasteland. Two witnesses say it struck Kelly a glancing blow with enough force to knock him over. Then, according to the statements of four people watching from separate houses, two policemen set about Kelly, punching, kicking and apparently hitting him with some sort of weapon.

Within an hour, the 53-year-old unemployed labourer was in handcuffs — and dead. Since then there have been three post mortems, a bizarre tug of war over the body, and a series of conflicting explanations of how he died.

Less than 12 hours after his death, Dr John Benstead, a Home Office pathologist, carried out a post mortem. He apparently found no serious injuries, but removed the heart for further tests. Next day, someone in the Southport Coroner's office speculated to Kelly's family that death had been caused by 'fatty tissues around the heart'. However, Kelly's brothers had seen bruises and grazes on the body when they visited the mortuary. They decided to ignore the burial order issued by the Coroner and ask for a second post mortem.

The independent pathologist discovered that Kelly had a double fracture of the jaw, a damaged vertebra at the top of the spine and more than 30 bruises. After his lengthy examination, watched by a detective, a police photographer and the Coroner's representative, he prepared to return to his laboratory with specimens from the body for further analysis. But suddenly he was notified that the burial order was now revoked, the body impounded by the Coroner and no specimens could be removed. The unfinished second post mortem was abruptly ended. Several days later Merseyside's Chief Constable called in

Professor Alan Usher, head of forensic pathology at Sheffield University, to prepare a third post mortem report. Meanwhile, Merseyside police force had decided to conduct an internal inquiry, headed by a senior detective from a nearby division.

The wasteland Jimmy Kelly was crossing that night is surrounded on three sides by council houses and overlooked by two 14-storey tower blocks on the fourth. Larry Healey, 32, who has spent seven years soldiering in Aden and Northern Ireland, lives next-door-but-one to the open ground. On the night of 20 June, he heard his dog barking in the garden and ran outside: 'I jumped up on to the garden fence and saw a police car hit him. It didn't belt him, just enough to knock him over.' At 25 yards, Healey saw one police officer get out from the passenger side and drag Kelly back to the car: 'That's when he started punching him saying "Get in you bastard".' Healey then walked to the corner of the wasteland: 'The bobby in the tunic started laying into him and giving him a good hiding, and I mean a good hiding'. A woman in her thirties was checking her children's bedroom window, which directly overlooked the police car, only yards away. She saw Kelly slouched against the car and a police officer, in shirt sleeves, kicking him: 'They were very nasty, deliberate kicks. He kept kicking him. It was disgusting.'

Two boys aged 13 and 16 living opposite the wasteland have since told detectives they witnessed the struggle and did not see the police strike Kelly. The youngest claims to have stopped the police car originally when Kelly called him an 'effing nigger' (the boy was white). He says Kelly tried to push the car with his hands and fell over, and that one police officer was only kicking away bricks and stones so that the drunken man did not roll on them. The boys also confidently assert that Kelly died of a heart attack. How do they know? 'The coppers told us when we were giving statements', said the 13-year-old.

From another bedroom window nearby, Martin Lavell, an unemployed butcher, saw

'one officer kneeling on top of him or next to him. He was hitting him with something. I couldn't see what it was. But it wasn't just his fist.' From the thirteenth floor of the flats, Frank Keegan, a 20-year-old tarmac worker, also saw the police kick the drunken Kelly. Then 'they crouched over him and I saw something being raised and lowered. He was striking down and giving it a bit of elbow. It was then I heard the sounds. Like two pieces of wood being knocked together.' A clue to the sounds might lie in some of Kelly's belongings, returned to his family after his death: they included a tobacco tin, so badly dented it was bent nearly double, and a small lighter, also deeply dented. Curiously, there was a small, half-empty, undamaged bottle of Teachers whisky. The brand is not sold by the off-licence at the Oak Tree pub where Kelly spent his last night drinking with his brother. Nor did an independent finger-print test find any of Kelly's fingerprints on the bottle. At the second post mortem it was revealed that Kelly's false teeth were missing. Almost a week after his death police officers returned to the wasteland and found two broken pieces of the missing dentures; a third piece was later found by the family solicitors.

But for the quick thinking of his family, Jimmy Kelly would have been buried without the true extent of his injuries being discovered. Under normal circumstances a procession of witnesses like that would have led very quickly to someone being charged with causing grievous bodily harm, at least. Because this case involves police officers, who can legitimately accost a drunken man, investigations can take longer. The result of the third post mortem is still awaited. But it will take an independent inquiry to convince many Merseysiders that justice is being done.

NEW STATESMAN INDEX

The index for July-December 1978 (Vol. 96) is now available, price 60p (\$1.20) post free, from the publisher
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Revenge on Vietnam

Who is really to blame for the tragedy of the 'boat people'? And who benefits from the international outrage? JOHN

PILGER, below, and ANTHONY BARNETT, overleaf, examine different aspects of the Sino-American axis.

WHILE TRAVELLING in South-East Asia during the past few weeks, I read the following news items. One: Manila police believe that America's Vietnam War movie *The Deer Hunter* has directly inspired a spate of Russian-roulette killings in the Philippines. 'The youths dress up like Americans', said a policeman, 'put a single round in a revolver, and dare each other... the movie is real popular here.'

Two: President Carter saw his favourite movie, *The Deer Hunter*, for the third time. He is reported to be 'deeply moved' by it, and comments on its 'authentic American message'.

Three: Vietnam, threatened by famine in seven provinces, has again appealed to the United States to 'forget the past and normalise relations, without conditions'. State Department sources said the President had no wish to recognise Vietnam 'until decency takes root in that land... the kind of decency we understand in America'.

A few weeks ago, in these pages, I described *The Deer Hunter*, that famous Hollywood smash, as a lie: designed to appease a sulking American bitterness called 'the new patriotism'; to satiate the box-office demand for gratuitous violence; to portray the Vietnamese as venal sub-humans, and the Americans in Vietnam as tragic heroes, and greeted by millions of Americans as a mighty purgative for everything the Americans did in Vietnam. Today *The Deer Hunter* is no longer a lie; it is a policy. And the policy is revenge.

THIS IS REVENGE based on the need to punish the Vietnamese for daring to evict the greatest military force in history. The policy is one which the President, the American government, and the accessories to the American disaster in Vietnam – such as Britain – now embrace with relish. Their cover is outrage in the name of the boat people. Their prize is capital investment in, and trade with the most populous nation, China. Their aim is to justify the American war, and give credence to other, similar adventures, and their delight is the spectacle of Vietnam in isolation, an 'international pariah', struggling once again to live and to be heard. It is as if we are watching the news films in reverse, and being returned with indifference to the point of departure – as though no bombs were dropped, no towns destroyed, no tears wept, no lessons learnt.

Nothing, it seems, is to be allowed for the fact that the Vietnamese – exhausted and pauperised, with much of their land converted into a poisonous moonscape after thirty years of foreign vandalism – are once again a nation at war. This time the enemy is less visible than the French guns at Dien Bien Phu, the B-52s over Hanoi and Haiphong, the Chinese buglers leading the assault last February. Now it is an international campaign: not just to discredit, but to blockade and to starve. 'It may take five or ten years to crack their leadership', says a State Department man, 'but we'll do it'.

They will not, of course, 'do it' any more



Keystone

than they could do it at Khe Sanh or Hamburger Hill: any more than they could find the light in the endless metaphoric tunnel. But what they are doing is wounding again a people who more than any other have earned the right to some kind of peace.

The subterfuge of concern for the boat people has added a new dimension to an American blockade of Vietnam which has been in force since 1964: the 'food weapon', which Mrs Thatcher prefers to call, simply, 'pressure'. During journeys in Vietnam since the American departure, I have seen the results. In the northern province of Vinh, perhaps the most-bombed piece of this planet – which few Westerners have seen – the craters are so numerous and large that they join together, and not even the foundations of buildings remain.

Here people are living under straw, and among the children are the familiar veined faces, pot bellies and pencil limbs of acute malnutrition. Natural disaster has been added: two crops failed almost completely in 1976 and 1977, and in September last year the typhoons came early, producing the worst floods of the century, destroying three million tons of rice and a quarter of the country's livestock. Six million people were made homeless and malaria returned in its lethal cerebral form. A mission of American doctors and nutritionists sent by Senator Edward Kennedy's Committee to Vietnam expressed 'shock' at the condition of the people they saw, and appealed for the world to 'bring Vietnam back from the precipice of calamity'. There was minimal response to this.

AT THE PEAK of the food shortages, which made few headlines in the West, 600,000 Chinese troops – more than the Americans ever had in Vietnam – invaded without warning. They destroyed dykes and canals that had

withstood Chinese invasions for 2,000 years, and American bombing more recently. They systematically blew up the last reserve stocks of rice, having been led to the food dumps by scouts recruited from among the Hoa, the ethnic Chinese of Vietnam.

The 'food weapon' is a legacy of Henry Kissinger, who created a 'zap office' in the State Department. Its task was to monitor the voting patterns of Third World countries, and to recommend 'zapping' – the suspension of food aid – for voting against US interests. During Kissinger's tenure, America gave more food aid to the Saigon regime than to any other country. This stopped abruptly in 1975. The new Vietnam was 'zapped'.

Kissinger's policy has been continued faithfully by President Carter, who has power to end the embargo without Congressional approval. Last autumn, with much of Vietnam still under water, the Kennedy mission appealed to the President to lift the embargo and

save thousands of Vietnamese men, women and children by a single act of magnanimity.

He refused. Britain has now suspended aid to Vietnam, the bulk of which was to be £4 million worth of food. On 3 July the EEC, roused by Mrs Thatcher's 'humanitarian initiative' on behalf of the boat people, halted the shipment of 100,000 tons of food to Vietnam, which included 15,000 tons of skimmed milk for young children.

One of the things that struck me, reported a member of the Kennedy mission, was that milk powder for young children is what they desperately need.

THE TRAGEDY of the boat people, now held to justify all this punishment, is the product of America's racist war against Vietnam, of China's most recent effort to subdue the Vietnamese – and of a state of siege in Hanoi and a despair that is like a presence.

Most of the first wave of refugees were the 'Cholon Chinese' of Saigon, who controlled the mosaic of corruption that was the South Vietnamese economy. The richest of them flew away with their gold before the collapse of April 1975, but the rest continued to control the Mekong rice trade for three years under the Hanoi government. In March last year, their businesses were nationalised – not out of racial spite, or even political dogma, but largely because southern Vietnam was under attack from the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia, backed by 10,000 Chinese 'advisers'. There was no alternative but to impose the wartime rationing long accepted in the North.

If there was a racial distinction, it was drawn by the Peking government which insisted that the Chinese of Vietnam were not Vietnamese at all, but 'people of the motherland'. At the same time, Peking exhorted them to flee – which they did. That the new Vietnamese authorities, mostly at the level of the *To* (the neighbourhood committee) extracted their pound of flesh in terms of gold and property is beyond doubt. But what is also beyond doubt is that the Hanoi government, unavailingly, gave Peking the opportunity to

mount an orderly evacuation of its 'nationals'.

Despite thirty years of war, of attacks from Cambodia, of threats from China, there has been no wholesale revenge in Vietnam: no 'rivers of blood'. Since the end of the American war, I have been to 'Saigon', and met openly people I knew well before: middle-class and capitalist to the core. Their misery is that of the harsh economic times they share with most of the population, though their prospects – often of life in the food-producing 'new economic zones' – are indeed something for which nothing in their former life prepared them. Their predicament is to have become the flotsam of the greatest consumer society in the world that produced nothing except dollar millionaires, Coke and drug addicts. When the Americans left, and pulled the intravenous tubes which fed that society, their own creation, they left these people with nothing, except a desire to follow.

THE ETHNIC CHINESE of the north are very different. They were mostly skilled workers who had blended with Vietnamese society, and were vital to the northern economy: so much so that after 1975, and during the Chinese campaign against 'racial persecution' in Vietnam, the Hanoi government offered them economic incentives.

That changed abruptly when the Chinese army attacked, and it was found that *Hoa* scouts had led the Chinese commandos around the mountain passes. The anger felt by this betrayal rebounded unjustly on all ethnic Chinese in the North who found themselves singled out as pawns in a struggle between their homeland and their 'motherland'. On the one side, Chinese troops killed those who refused to collaborate. On the other, the Vietnamese gave them the choice of crossing into China, or of going to the new economic zones – far from the northern frontier, and far from the eastern coast where the next Chinese invasion is expected. The third option was the sea voyage to Hong Kong.

These choices were brutal, and cannot in any way be condoned. But there must be some account of the circumstances which produced them.

No doubt headlines like 'An Asian Holocaust' – taken up by a half-page *Guardian* advertisement last week, paid for by a group of leading British charities – will get the postal orders flowing in. And certainly the refugees crushed behind the high wire fences in Hong Kong need help. But to compare the boat people with the Jews of the Holocaust is to profane the memory of those who were led to the gas chambers of Auschwitz. Oxfam is one of the signatories to the *Guardian* advertisement: Oxfam's director, Brian Walker, was in Vietnam last January, and returned with only words of sympathy and understanding for the country's dreadful post-war problems, and measured praise for 'considerable strides in human rights'. He made no allusion to a 'Holocaust' then.

The campaign to equate Vietnam with Nazi Germany involves some omissions. No mention is made of the Vietnamese request to Washington to fly out 10,000 refugees a month in an 'airbridge' similar to that which operated between Havana and Miami through the 60's and which ensured that 700,000 people left Cuba without a single loss of life.

The Vietnamese government and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees have agreed on a plan to fly out ethnic Chinese. But the



These two photographs are on display in the streets of Hanoi: left, the famous picture of an American GI captured by a woman of the Vietcong; right, a Chinese soldier takes his place.

catch, of course, is that people cannot fly out if no country will take them. Nor has there been mention of the 320,000 Cambodian refugees – as many as all the boat people – who were given refuge in Vietnam from a genuine holocaust, produced by the Cambodian regime of Pol Pot, which perhaps exterminated a quarter of the Khmer population. How many charity advertisements were there on behalf of these people?

THE PARAMOUNT tragedy, for the Vietnamese and for the boat people, is the repulse of Vietnam's unrelenting – even pathetic – attempts at conciliation with America. For more than a year before Washington gave its blessing to the Chinese invasion (and President Carter renewed the economic embargo) Vietnam had dropped all claims to the \$3.4 billion reparations promised in the Paris accords of 1972. The Vietnamese invited a conga line of American bankers, oilmen, travel agents and Congressmen to Hanoi to discuss business, investment, tourism and diplomatic recognition. When I was there last year (NS 15 September) they moved a Cuban delegation out of the best hotel to make way for some bankers from the Chase Manhattan. This was the work of Nguyen Co Thach, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who said this just last month to a visiting group from the American Chamber of Commerce of Hong Kong:

On 29 September last year, after months of talks, I met Richard Holbrooke (*US Assistant Secretary of State*) in New York. We accepted the US position on normalisation. We agreed to defer other problems until later. We agreed on the number of embassy staff, even where the embassies would be located. *Everything* was agreed. I waited in New York through October and then I had to go home. In November I got a message that there was now 'a question of Cambodia'.

The old Deer Hunters in Washington did not only encourage the Chinese attack on Vietnam (what became of John Foster Dulles' 'campaign to save the brave peoples of Vietnam and South-East Asia from the evils of Chinese Communism'?) They also condemned Vietnam for invading Cambodia and overthrowing the genocidal regime of Pol Pot.

Still, speaking last month, Thach repeated that from Vietnam's side normalisation was still available without conditions. He added that with relations once established, 'anything'

would be possible. Vietnam would even consider requests for US ships and planes 'to use our facilities, provided they respect our sovereignty'. Asked to recall the American war, he said: 'I would rather not talk about it... I don't want to open the past.'

This is not just conciliation towards a former enemy: Thach's words reflect a desperate wish to extricate Vietnam from the cold war between Russia and China. Hoping that America would respond, the Vietnamese held off signing a 'friendship treaty' with the Russians, whose assistance they have never used except with a long-handled spoon. Only when the State Department tried to stop World Bank grants to Vietnam did they reluctantly join Comecon. They are now charged with being in peonage to Moscow. It is not true, but the isolation now imposed on them is apt to produce that very condition.

OF COURSE, the cynicism directed at Vietnam is extended to the boat people. No government, least of all the British, is giving refuge to people because they are helpless. There is no orderly queue in the camps of Hong Kong. There is, in the words of a UN camp supervisor, 'nothing more than a human meat market and a buyer's market at that'.

America has five strict categories in its 'Indochinese Parole Programme.' If you are a former CIA runner, you make it. If you are an illiterate fisherman you are Category Five and do not make it. One day last week there were 61,144 refugees in Hong Kong. On the same day, one refugee 'qualified' for re-settlement in the West.

Meanwhile, the President of the United States remains 'deeply moved' by *The Deer Hunter*, and deaf to the pleas of an exhausted and hungry nation. That his country's war caused the death and maiming of several million Vietnamese, and the flight of countless refugees on land and sea, and achieved *nothing*, in the cause of *nothing*, is the saddest truth of my time. That so many appear to have forgotten this, or do not wish to remember, or do not care, is a great pity. That vengeance should be visited on a peasant people, because they the effrontery to win their independence, is a crime.

John Pilger is a special writer on the *Daily Mirror*.

China's role in the exodus

TWO MONTHS AGO, at a special UN conference in Indonesia, the Vietnamese authorities announced their willingness to process the exit of 10,000 citizens a month. Had planes been laid on by the recipient powers, air tickets could have been paid by the refugees' own families and the incentive to take to the seas would have been minimised. The US delegation is reported to have been 'particularly annoyed' by the offer and so far Washington has refused to take refugees straight from Vietnam. It has, however, doubled the number of people it will take from the camps. News of this will certainly have been broadcast to Vietnam by *Voice of America* and the result can only have been to lure more people on to boats.

Washington has seized the plight of the refugees as an opportunity to campaign against Vietnam. In particular, the comparison now being made between that war-torn and impoverished peasant society and Nazi Germany has enabled the United States to justify retrospectively its war with Vietnam and prepare the way for further interventions in the Third World. This campaign would not have been possible, however, without the help of China – whose contribution to the tragedy of the 'boat people' has received little notice.

In March last year, the Chinese promulgated a new constitution. Article 54 reads:

The state protects the just rights and interests of overseas Chinese and their relatives.

Since then, Chinese leaders have expounded an extra-territorial version of nationality. Last month, Teng Tsiao-ping announced:

The hearts of our compatriots . . . and of overseas Chinese are turned to the motherland and their patriotic consciousness has been constantly raised. They are playing an increasingly important, positive role in realising the great cause of reunifying the motherland, supporting the country's modernisation and strengthening the international struggle against hegemonism.

Thus overseas Chinese have been given an overtly political role, at odds with Vietnam's domestic policy of taking aid from all socialist countries including the U.S.S.R. The ethnic Chinese resident in Vietnam, who are known as the Hoa, were mostly born in the country and Hanoi has insisted that they are Vietnamese citizens. Peking disagrees and last year, in negotiations between the two countries, a spokesman for the Chinese government said of Vietnam's claim:

In this way one million and several hundred thousand Chinese nationals in South Vietnam are written off at one stroke. This is absolutely unacceptable.

China thereby claimed all the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam.

Why, then, is Peking not looking after the ethnic Chinese, instead of letting them drown in the sea? Many refugees from Saigon would have no wish to go to China, but that is only part of the answer. Last year, China actually sent passenger boats to Vietnam – amid some fanfare – to pick up Hoa, and the Vietnamese gave them permission to land on 20 June 1978. Many of the southern Hoa were mobilised and prepared to board, but the ships anchored offshore. The boats sent from the 'motherland' would dock, a Peking spokesman explained, only if Hanoi admitted the presence of 'persecuted Chinese nationals'. Had Hanoi acceded, all the remaining Hoa in Vietnam would, by logical extension, have come under China's constitution; Cholon, and its control of the Mekong rice trade, would in effect have become an extra-territorial concession, such as those once implanted in the main Chinese cities by European colonial powers. Hanoi refused. The boats left – and the Hoa began to take to the sea.

During China's invasion of Vietnam it seems that Hoa who had fled north across the border acted as guides to lead the Chinese troops to hidden stores and outflank Viet-

namese positions; meanwhile, the affiliation of those who stayed was one of China's war claims. The general population of Vietnam, on rations close to famine after suffering years of war, faced a new national threat. A huge poster went up in Hanoi which graphically suggested that Peking had taken up the place of Washington. The grotto from which Ho Chi Minh launched the liberation struggle in 1944, which is a kind of Vietnamese national shrine, was captured by Chinese troops and dynamited. Following China's withdrawal, Teng Tsiao-ping made an open-ended threat that China would invade again, and those with specialist knowledge of the region seem to regard another, even greater, confrontation as probable. Under these conditions what is surprising is that there has been no pogrom of the Hoa, no cases of mass attacks or imprisonment, no death threats or torture.

The United States lost something in Vietnam greater than the war itself: its power to intervene at will across the globe was broken once the legitimacy of its intentions had been so disastrously exposed. Hence the function of comparing the Jews to the Hoa is not at all humanitarian – even when the comparison is made by those whose concern is only for the human catastrophe now taking place on the South China Sea. For if Vietnam is like Nazi Germany, then it was right for the Americans to fight it, and a pity that the war was lost.

The *Economist*, for one, understands the real logic of the argument. In the issue of 30 June 1979, as it detailed Hitler's policy as the forerunner of Hanoi's, its editorial argued:

The passing of time since the Vietnam war ended, and the boat people's evidence of what a Communist Indochina is like, have begun to change the conventional wisdom about that unsuccessful but not dishonourable American intervention.

The editorial was concerned to endorse the creation of a 100,000 strong US force ready to be deployed anywhere in the world.

FINANCE Rob Bryer and Terry Brignall

British Steel are fiddling the figures on Corby

The price of the corporate plan

BRITISH STEEL CORPORATION'S case for closing down steel-making at Corby – which will make 6,000 workers redundant and push the local unemployment rate to over 20 per cent – is financially unsound. The BSC claims that moving production to Redcar will save them £42 million a year. But an examination of BSC's methodology shows it to be seriously flawed and our own calculations, using BSC's own figures, suggest that the potential saving from closing Corby is insignificant.

BSC's calculation of a £42 million saving is summarised in the table. 'Tonnage variable' costs are those which increase or decrease in line with production, such as iron ore, coke and oxygen costs. 'Time variable' costs are those which do not vary with production levels and are fixed for a period of time, such as labour administrative and research costs.

Rob Bryer and Terry Brignall are lecturers in accounting and finance at the University of Warwick. Both have extensive experience of working in private industry.

There are two major objections to this calculation. First it is based on the '1978/9 standard costs' at Corby, i.e. what the management thought it was costing to run Corby last year; in fact the 1978/9 accounts showed the actual costs were less than this. Even more

important, for Redcar the BSC assume 'best practice costs', i.e. what, using extremely favourable assumptions, it would cost to run Redcar if it gets Corby's production. This biases the calculation in favour of Redcar but has no logical basis. Judging from the BSC's

The BSC's case for closing Corby

	£m. p.a.	£m. p.a.
Firstly, take the tonnage variable cost savings of producing at Redcar compared to producing at Corby		4.8
Secondly, take the total current (1978/9) time variable costs for all Corby iron and steel-making	59.2	
Take away from these total time variable costs, those which the BSC estimate will still have to be paid even if iron and steel-making is closed	(9.1)	
This gives the current time variable costs which the BSC claim can be saved at Corby of	50.1	
However, a new slitting department will be required at Corby if steel is sent from Redcar, costing	(2.5)	
So, the total current time variable costs saved at Corby would be	47.6	
But, we have to subtract from this the extra time variable costs which would be incurred at Redcar in supplying the extra steel to Corby of	(10.3)	
So, the balance of advantage to Redcar in terms of time variable costs appears to be		37.3
If we now add to this the advantage to Redcar on tonnage variable costs (of £4.8m.) we get the BSC's claimed saving of		42.1

document little money would be needed to make Corby efficient – though they have not taken this issue seriously enough to go into detail. A fair comparison would look at the best practice costs for both plants; this eliminates £16.6 million of the BSC's 'saving'.

Second the BSC assume that if Corby were closed most of its time variable costs would be saved; but they assume that Redcar would never be able to save any of its time variable costs if production were not transferred. Again there is no logical basis for refusing to evaluate such a possibility and BSC have never justified their assumption, which accounts for a further £19.1 million of their 'saving'.

Allowing for these deficiencies in the calculation the potential saving in transferring production comes out at £6.4 million, which is 8.2 per cent of Redcar's total costs. The BSC's own 'Capital Expenditure Manual' sensibly recognises that cost savings exercises are subject to a margin of error and says that ± 10 per cent should be regarded as insignificant.

Furthermore the £6.4 million may be an

overestimate. Some of the costs following on from the transfer from Corby to Redcar have been omitted. For instance, there are possible technical difficulties in using Redcar steel instead of Corby steel. Additionally, Redcar has to run on imported iron ore and, it is planned, imported coal. BSC admit that they have assumed *no real cost increase* in these crucial inputs. BSC also admit that over two-fifths of the £38 million of Redcar's time variable costs are guesswork – no detailed studies have been made to substantiate them. It has taken three weeks of continuous pressure from the trades unions to get only part of the basic background information which BSC would have had automatically if it had made such detailed costings.

This all suggests that BSC, out of loyalty to their ten-year plan to concentrate production on the big plants such as Redcar (despite international evidence that this may be mistaken) had made up their mind to close Corby regardless of the financial implications.

There have been other examples of this. BSC claims to allocate its massive £208 mil-

lion interest charge burden (two thirds of its total loss) to its plants on the basis of their net assets. But Corby has to make enough profits to cover 6 per cent of the BSC's interest charge, even though it has only 3 per cent of the corporation's net assets. This interest bill is the result of the BSC's past losses and its big investment programme; as Corby has received hardly any capital investment it is open to question whether it is anyway correct to allocate part of the interest bill to its trading account. Excluding these dubious and inflated interest charges, Corby has only lost money once in recent years and is now moving back into profit.

None of our calculations are intended to suggest that Redcar should be closed instead of Corby. We just do not know whether Redcar could be made viable in the long term but it is possible that a serious study would show both plants could be made viable in a decentralised BSC structure if the plants were operating at less than full capacity and saving some of their (predominantly non-labour) fixed costs.

EDUCATION

Comprehensives undermined

THE EDUCATION BILL, which passed the House of Commons after somewhat feeble opposition this week, is the first step in the Conservatives' plans to dismantle comprehensive education. Not that they preach such a policy openly yet; too many of their education committee chairmen are committed to comprehensive schools to make such frankness possible, and they know how unpopular the eleven plus still is. So their professed policy is 'local freedom'. All they are doing, they insist, is to put the clock back to 1976 and allow councils to organise their schools as they wish.

The urgency for the Bill stems from promises made during the election in Bolton, Cumbria and North Yorkshire that grammar schools which were due to go comprehensive this September would be 'rescued'. So when the Bill becomes law on July 26th, local officials will be able to set in motion a last-minute selection process (Bolton has held an eleven-plus exam already), find the youngsters during their school holidays and tell them which schools they will be going to next year. It will involve the same chaos and uncertainty as occurred in Tameside two years ago.

The 1944 Education Act requires Mark Carlisle to control and direct local education authorities in the implementation of a national policy; 'local option' makes no sense as such a policy. Many of the areas where comprehensive controversy is at its highest are places like Bolton which suffer regular changes in political control. If Conservative policy is to be taken seriously, we shall see the eleven plus revived and dismantled at regular quinquennial intervals.

From leaks about their 'assisted places' scheme – shortly to be published in another education bill – the government's aim is to restore an educational elite of rather under 10 per cent of each age group – with two or three per cent 'assisted' to pay fees. Where possible this will be done with local co-operation, but, even where the local authority objects, bright children will be siphoned off to independent schools; £50 million has been put aside for the purpose. Coinciding as it does with massive public expenditure cuts imposed upon state schools, this is a grotesquely divisive policy. Many local councils have already come out against the scheme, as has Dr John Rae, headmaster of Westminster:

Either comprehensive schools can cope with bright children or they can't; if they can there is no possible justification for sending children to independent schools at public expense. If they

cannot, that is the case for a thorough enquiry into what steps should be taken to provide this minority with the education they need. It is not a case for creaming off the few lucky ones. That is not – as the Conservatives claim – better than nothing; it is worse than nothing, because it will encourage people to think that a solution has been found when it has not.

The Bill's longer term aim is to relieve authorities of the need to pay regard to the comprehensive principle, and pave the way for the re-establishment of grammar schools by local education authorities – or even individual voluntary schools in areas already comprehensive. Bexley is about to apply to do this and parents and teachers are objecting. Mr Carlisle will then have to make a decision on these 'section 13' proposals to change the character of comprehensive schools back into grammar schools again. Like Mrs Thatcher nine years ago, he is refusing to reveal the criteria he will set himself in making such decisions. Tameside, now under Labour control again, will present another test: it wants to go comprehensive and if 'local option' means anything, it should be allowed to do so. Mrs Thatcher's technique was to allow some so-called 'comprehensives' in an area, but then preserve one grammar school to keep the eleven plus exam alive in the primary schools. Mr Carlisle may well try to follow her precedent.

At all events the Bill is irrelevant to the real problems of local authorities in secondary education – which revolve round an acute shortage of resources and an inability to plan coherently for a shrinking school population. If it had received more sustained opposition at the committee stage, it could have been made more difficult for Bolton to bring back its grammar schools this September. But in the end the 'usual channels' prevailed, under which agreements are made and deals are done to suit the 'convenience of the House' and ensure that MPs get their holidays at the end of July; and since the House of Lords will not oppose anything seriously for the next five years, the Bill will become law next week. So it is now up to Labour councillors – and Labour voters in next year's council elections – to continue the fight to prevent the clock being put back 20 years in education.

Christopher Price

Teachers censor report

A REPORT OF the Schools Council project on multi-racial education, banned in 1978 because it criticised teachers' attitudes to race and highlighted racial comments by both teachers and

children, is after all to be published. But the parts that officials from the National Union of Teachers (NUT) did not like are to remain censored.

The project has always been controversial. It began in 1973 from a proposal put up by the NUT and the National Association for Multiracial Education (NAME) to develop teaching materials for a multiracial society. But in three years, the project team of eight went through four directors before completion in summer 1977.

The team's eventual report dealt with how children acquire racial attitudes and concluded that teachers understood little of the problems faced by children from ethnic minority groups. Moreover, the team's belief that ethnic minorities should be encouraged to hold on to their own cultures and languages cuts right across the official NUT view that the minorities should be assimilated into British society as thoroughly as possible.

In January 1978, the report was turned down by the teacher-dominated Schools Council on the grounds that the introduction was 'too impressionistic', 'too verbose', 'pretentious and contentious'. The Council insisted that it objected *only to style ('over journalised') and length, not to content*; an NUT official came out straight and called it 'a slander against teachers'.

Examples of racialism given in the censored part of the report include a teacher who walked into a room where West Indian children were having extra language tuition and said, 'Excuse me, is this Dudley zoo?' Many teachers interviewed regarded racist name-calling by children ('black sambo', 'monkey brains', 'filthy paki') as no different from calling a child 'fatty', 'four eyes' or 'spotty'. But the team maintained that while all are upsetting to the child concerned, 'racial name-calling is of a qualitatively different order'.

The team proposed changes in the curriculum which took account of the experience of ethnic-minority children and sought to improve it. Any attempt, they said, to interfere with the logic of their argument or the force of the evidence quoted to substantiate it 'would make a nonsense of the report'; they would accept editing, but not censorship.

Last December, the Schools Council produced a revised and teacher-approved version of the introduction. This was unacceptable to the project team, who wanted the Council either to publish the original report and disclaim responsibility for the contents, or to allow the team to publish it independently. But now the Council has decided to go ahead with its own 'cleaned-up' version.

Rick Rogers

GRANADA TELEVISION THE STATE OF THE NATION

A television producer receives an invitation. It is from a man who has escaped from police custody. He is thought to be a terrorist leader, responsible for bombings and assassinations. He asks the producer to interview him in a neighbouring country and not tell the police.

What does the producer do?

What does the broadcasting organisation do?

Can the police insist on co-operation?

What happens when MPs protest to the Home Secretary?

THE BOUNDS OF FREEDOM — 'TERRORISM'

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GRANADA TELEVISION



Can the Left win this time round?

The Labour Party is in search of an identity: should MPs be decide policy and placement? PATRICK WINTOUR explains delegates or representatives; should the party or the leader the battle and the currents behind it.

ALMOST AS IF to assuage the party gods, every electoral defeat produces a period of bloodletting in the Labour Party. But this time round there is a difference; the left has progressed further than ever before in pushing for major constitutional changes in the way the party is run, the leadership operates and policy is determined. This debate, on the surface over administrative matters, is in fact a continuation of the age-old left-right policy war but on another front. The left have a very clear idea of where power lies in the party and are pursuing their aims with great ruthlessness.

No Labour Party institution is currently immune from the attention of some reformer. The power of the party leader and the whips must be curtailed. The MP needs a new relationship with his constituency party. The Parliamentary Labour Party needs a more formal structure to ensure that it controls the leadership. The manifesto must be drawn up in a different way and some influential Labour officials think the party needs a giant exercise in discussion so that the programme can be rewritten by 1983. The composition of conference needs alteration, restoring the old representation of the constituencies. The organisation of the party needs, as ever an overhaul. Everyone must be paid more.

Much of this was in the air before the election but the crushing defeat has made the pressure for change more intense. As things stand at the moment the left have a strong chance of winning many of the prizes they seek. Much depends on the left's tactical sensitivity and how far Callaghan – who opposes them – has alienated the unions, whose block votes will decide the issue at conference in October.

Over the next few months issues and alliances within the Labour Party should become clarified. Some – such as the way the PLP is run – will not be settled until parliament reassembles again in November when a working party of the PLP should have produced a report on the subject. At the moment the coalitions are remarkably fluid – often changing according to which issue is under discussion. On party organisation, for instance, strange breeds of left-right alliance have been formed involving people who could never agree on explicit policy issues. Many unions and MPs are hanging back from joining an alliance until it is clear how strongly the constituency parties feel about the campaign for greater democracy in the party and until it is obvious who is interested in making a bid for the party leadership.

At present, many of the potential candidates are feeling their way cautiously, looking around for a policy which they can embrace. They have heeded the cynical advice of Evelyn Waugh's Gilbert Pinfold that 'in a democracy men do not seek authority so that they may impose a policy, they seek a policy in order to acquire authority.' This has led some politicians into some curious positions. Roy Hattersley, for instance, is currently the cham-

pion both of an incomes policy and the idea of socialism without the state. Shirley Williams praises the Freedom of Information Act – something she personally smothered in Cabinet Committee by arguing against a right to know clause. John Silkin, the shadow industry spokesman, doubtless intends to use his attacks on the policies of Sir Keith Joseph as a parliamentary launching pad in his bid for power. Only Healey, to the exasperation of his friends, seems unable to begin campaigning. Tony Benn, in a display of irrepressible energy is firing off salvos from his vantage point on the NEC, speaking publicly six times a week and receiving 20 such invitations a day.

Benn sees himself in the role of a preacher – the illuminator of the party. He tried this once before when, as chairman of the party in 1972, he attempted to open the party to pressure groups alienated from party politics. Their representatives were placed on specially established policy forming sub-committees. The new party line which emerged from this process was accepted by the 1973 conference but, notoriously, rejected by the leadership and the Labour cabinet.

Benn is determined that this will not happen again. He talks of policy-making being log-jammed and there being no point in embarking on another process of policy-making until this log-jam is dismantled. This means destroying the patronage of the leader. He must be elected by an electoral college from the party as a whole – not just by the PLP – and he must lose his veto over particular items of policy in the manifesto. The manifesto, Benn insists, in contrast to much of the left, must be written by the NEC alone – a precedent he deliberately set during the European direct elections. The MP must be made more responsive to his party constituents by introducing compulsory reselection before each general election and by making ballots at meetings of the PLP public. Not all those who characterise themselves as left wing agree with this last proposal and some of Benn's supporters feel he may have made a tactical mistake by attempting too many reforms so quickly. Benn, the only Labour leader making a serious attempt to build mass support for himself in the Labour movement, knows this is a risk.

However, until a month ago, no-one believed that constitutional changes would be discussed at the Labour party conference until 1981, as the three year rule limits discussion following last year's conference defeat for proposals on reselection of MPs and electing the leader. This, serious correspondents informed us, meant that Healey would be home and dry as leader. Things have not turned out like that. A month ago the Organisation Committee chaired by Eric Heffer, reversed a previous decision, ignored the three-year rule of the party, and put reselection and election of the party leader on the conference agenda. The three-year rule has now been completely abandoned. Although it

is possible that the Conference Arrangements Committee may devise some way round these issues, their task has been made more difficult by the massive number of resolutions sent in on the subject from the constituencies.

The outcome of this palace revolution depends critically on how the AUEW's delegation behaves at the Labour party conference, where their one million strong vote is the second largest block vote. As a result of the complex voting arrangements in the union the AUEW delegation frequently wants to vote in a different way from that favoured by the executive. Last year, for instance, the right wing president-elect, Terry Duffy, openly threatened the delegation, who had voted for full reselection of MPs that they would never again be allowed to vote against his own or his executive's wishes. (A misunderstanding by Hugh Scanlon ensured that the delegation vote was lost anyway.)

The engineering delegation, which dominates the AUEW conference vote, is elected by branch ballots in 26 divisions. The highest turnout in these votes this year was 6.1 per cent. Most divisions had a 2 per cent turnout. The AUEW executive, on the other hand, is elected by postal ballot of all the union members and is now uniformly right-wing. Incomplete results so far suggest that the delegation will be left-wing, as is the policy making national conference which has the power to instruct the delegation on how they should vote. Duffy's first hurdle is to get past the meeting of the full national conference, probably to be held in September. He may try to keep the issue of the election of the Labour party leader off the agenda or go for a vague motion which gives him a free hand at conference. Then he will have to fight the delegation at conference in the tradition of the Fifties.

More important even than the AUEW, is the way the TGWU cast their 1.25 million mass vote. Last year they voted for reselection but against a change in the way the leader was elected. Changing their mind on this last issue would swing the conference vote in favour of reform. The Scarborough conference of the TGWU this month (lobbied by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy) voted for reselection and supported a broad executive motion for increased accountability in the party: this could give Moss Evans the mandate he needs to switch his union's vote on electing the leader.

At the moment it is not yet clear what Evans' position is on this matter. As Lewis Minkin's book, the *Labour Party Conference* amply details, union leaders are immensely wary of being seen to wield such power over Labour party leaders. But Evans and his senior colleagues, Harry Urwin, deputy general secretary and Alex Kitson, deputy general secretary-elect will be lobbied heavily by the Labour Co-ordinating Committee (a group of mainly but not exclusively Bennites) to support their line. They argue that election of the leader by conference alone would put the leadership issue unacceptably in the hands



From left to right, Moss Evans, Stan Pemberton, Harry Urwin (seated) and Alex Kitson: the TGWU leaders who control the biggest block vote at the Labour Conference.

of a tiny group of union leaders, but that the unions should legitimately become involved in the leadership through an electoral college in which they would be represented. The argument being presented is that the current unpopularity of the unions is the result of the Callaghan government's failure to represent working class interests. The unions need to intervene in the party to restore that traditional role. Evans is so annoyed at being made the scapegoat for the election defeat that he may accept this analysis. Indeed he may be forced to by a left-wing executive over which he has less control than his predecessor Jack Jones.

CALLAGHAN, MEANWHILE, is not inactive. Abandoning his mission of leading the country in the direction of the promised land, he now has the comparatively modest design of making the party safe for social democracy. In this he is sharply different from Harold Wilson who went to write and sulk in his tent after 1970 leaving a beleaguered Healey to field the left on the NEC. Callaghan is already working hard with the NUR, APEX and the leadership of the AUEW. He also has allies in the GMWU – general secretary David Basnett and a regional organiser Derek Gladwin – Callaghan's campaign manager during the election, chairman of the powerful conference arrangements committee and possible general secretary of the Labour Party when Ron Hayward retires in two years or so.

Basnett's contribution to Callaghan's cause has been to write to the NEC saying that Trades Unionists for a Labour Victory is to become a permanent body and also to push for a joint union-NEC inquiry into the organisation of the party. The left fear that this inquiry would become a vehicle for a series of reforms which would oust the left from some of their strategic strongholds on the NEC and its sub-committees. Basnett's targets are outlined in a Fabian pamphlet published last year by a leading member of the Basnett entourage, Dianne Hayter, general secretary of the Fabians. She wants to abolish the women's section on the NEC and bring in 11 rank and file members elected by regional conferences. Some right-wing unionists want to replace the constituency section of the NEC by MPs elected solely by the PLP.

For such a change to be made it would be essential to get rid of some members of the NEC. Callaghan would like to remove treasurer Norman Atkinson, Joan Maynard and Renee Short from the women's section and Les Huckfield as the clubs' representative. Roy Grantham of APEX organised a move against Maynard and Short last year but the

attempt failed because of the need to gather support for the election of union representatives to the many vacant union seats on the NEC. Since there will be less need to make deals this year for the union NEC posts, the unions should have a less restricted hand to vote as they wish on the women's section.

Even if the right do not triumph immediately at the NEC elections the poor state of party organisation, for which the left dominated NEC is theoretically responsible, may give them another lever. In some working class areas, such as Glasgow and Liverpool, membership of constituency parties is well below 300. Trades union organisers who came to help the party during the election were appalled at what they found. There were only 80 agents, of whom only 15 were employed in the 50 most marginal seats. There are no agents in Glasgow, Birmingham, Leeds and Newcastle and one has to cover the whole of Wales.

The party's finances are also in a mess, with the unions having had to bail the party out both during the election and over the move of its headquarters to Walworth Road. There is little scope for the unions to increase the political levy as this would involve an increase in union subscriptions – something which union leaders find is hard to win from their conferences. There is also nervousness about increasing the levy at a time when the Tories are launching a campaign to encourage trades unionists to contract out.

A further sign of decay is the great age of most of the regional organisers, who are on the verge of retirement. This has given Basnett the chance to call for an inquiry into the whole structure of the party. The left, jealous of their powerful position on the NEC, may be making a tactical mistake by resisting such a move.

Basnett dislikes the way in which the left use their position to raise those aspects of party organisation which suit them. But if the unions do not get their way, they can simply mandate the NEC to start an enquiry. Furthermore, not all Basnett's proposals should be anathema to the left. In an attempt to rebuild Labour's working class support he wants the party to start factory branches. He wants more spending in the regions and less at Transport House: the left-orientated research department itself recognises that one of the problems in the past has been too little discussion of policy outside Transport House before it is accepted as party policy.

Whether Basnett gets his enquiry or not, great changes are taking place in the organisation. This month's decision to increase the pay of agents by 40 per cent and give others

big pay increases will cost the party an estimated £500,000. It is therefore absolutely essential now to increase membership income so the party can break out of the cycle of falling membership and dwindling resources. As a first step a sub-committee of the Organisation Committee, chaired by Eric Heffer, has suggested an increase in constituency subs from £1.20 to £5. He is also suggesting that there should be a card vote for every 150 members instead of the 1,000 members which all constituency parties are assumed to have at the moment. This policy is partly justified on the grounds that constituency members should have more representation because they pay their subs as individuals, rather than involuntarily through the union levy; the unions similarly have a card vote for every 1,000 members. The change would also encourage constituency parties to expand their real membership, as it would be much easier for them to accumulate more votes with the lower threshold. The proposal would increase the predominantly left wing constituency representation at conference roughly three-fold and mark a move back to the days of the early fifties when the constituency vote was 500,000 larger than the biggest block vote of the unions. Any diminution of union power will inevitably be resisted unless the unions are offered something in exchange such as full scale inquiry into the party's finances, 80 per cent of which is provided through the unions.

Some left-wingers feel they have also made another error in pushing so hard their proposals for changes in the operation of the PLP. They fear that if successful these changes could strengthen the hands of the non-Tribunite majority in the PLP by developing a formal agenda and system of voting. The PLP would thus become more powerful vis-à-vis the NEC, the left's stronghold.

Benn has been bravely struggling to forge an alliance with the Manifesto Group over the inadequacies of the PLP. But Mike Thomas pointed out at one meeting recently Benn was approaching the problem from a diametrically opposite position. The Manifesto Group wants to strengthen the PLP against the whips, giving it some self-respect, so that it becomes an effective body of representatives rather than one of delegates from the constituencies as favoured by the left. Formal agendas, better backbench study groups and a larger research staff would, the Manifesto Group calculate, take a lot of the heat out of the demand from the left that MPs should be delegates whose decisions on policy and office holders should be taken in open ballot.

The effect of all these controversies about internal democracy is that there has been a, hopefully temporary, lull in the policy-making programme. Major policy committees of the NEC have not met since the election and some MPs feel that the argument against the Tories is going by default, though union leaders who are going round now muttering that their patience is wearing thin at these left-right arguments have happily indulged in internal feuding in the past when it suited them.

It seems better – and perhaps inevitable – that the Labour Party should have their disagreements now in the first year after a defeat rather than a few months before an election, although the party has been left unreformed for so long that it sometimes seems hard to believe it is capable of change. For an allegedly progressive party, this is not an impressive sight.

Britain's profitable brew

LIKE MANY COUNTRIES, the beautiful and fertile countryside of Malawi belies the nature of its political regime. Tens of thousands of acres of the land are covered in lush green tea estates – which provide the country with its second largest export, two-thirds of which come to Britain. The people who work on these estates live, for the most part, in abject poverty, while the companies who employ them profit massively.

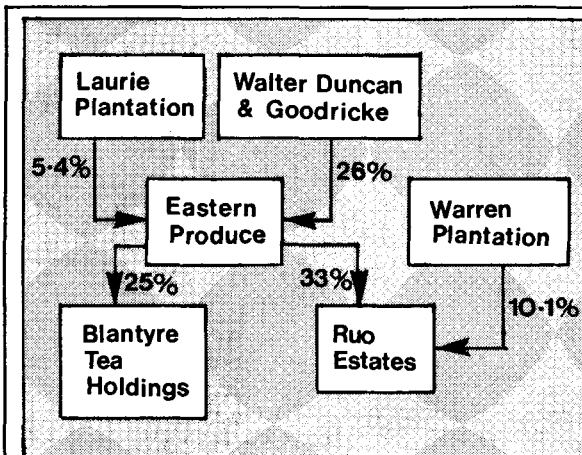
The Ruo Estate, which produces almost a tenth of Malawi's tea, is situated in the southern Mulanje region. The 7000 acre plantation employs 4000 workers, some no older than eleven. Basic wage rates are about 15p a day, which is the price of a loaf of bread. Even this low wage is conditional on the completion of a certain minimum quota of work. There are small skill allowances for factory based workers and nominal productivity bonuses for leaf pickers but exiled Malawian trades unionists say the wages are still 'below subsistence level'.

The non-wage benefits, such as free meals, housing, education, medicine and clothing which the Ruo company provide are very limited. The mid-shift meal consists solely of a stodgy ground-maize porridge. A piece of dried fish is offered on the day after pay-day so there is an incentive for the migrant workers to come back to the estate for another week's work. No one starves but this vitamin and protein deficient diet is probably a major factor in the prevalence of slow-healing open ulcerated sores and a general lack of resistance to disease.

Not all the employees are housed. Those that are, find living conditions cramped and over-crowded in the tiny concrete-block houses. In the scorching summer sun they swelter beneath the cheap, but impracticable, corrugated-iron roofs. Rarely more than seventy children attend the company school, which is a ramshackle building staffed by one or two teachers. Such a building could never cope with the children of several thousand employees and is anyway little more than a child-minding centre. Besides, with wages so low, many youngsters can't afford the luxury of an education. To supplement parental income, they either become plantation workers themselves, or farm family plots in their village.

A clinic is staffed on a part-time basis. But it is preoccupied with curing illnesses that could have been prevented in the first place if, for example, the workers were properly clothed. Few tea pickers have any warm or waterproof garments to protect them against the sudden cold temperatures and torrential rains. They dress in a scanty patch-work of rags. Most are without footwear. Low pay and piece-work rates force the workers to pick tea even in bad weather – if they don't they lose a day's pay. Consequently, 'flu and pneumonia are rife – the latter being a major killer, especially amongst young children.

Safety standards in the processing plant are virtually non-existent. There are few guards on dangerous machinery, and little protection for those liable to inhale tea dust. Steam-generator operatives are subject to occasional spurts of scalding water from leaking valves. Under such circumstances, it's not surprising



Hastings Banda (right, with friend) rules a country in which British companies (above) make staggering profits from growing tea.



that life expectancy is not much beyond forty years and that one third of all infants die within a few months of birth.

Such conditions contrast with the comparative luxury enjoyed by the British managers. On a diet of fresh meat and milk, even the guard dogs which protect their spacious homes eat far better than the African labourers. The situation is aggravated by Ruo's choice of managers. Almost invariably inveterate racists, they refer to Africans as 'black bastards', and see themselves as natural successors to the colonial masters who once ruled the Empire.

IT IS A PROFITABLE policy. Ruo is a British company with its shares quoted on the London Stock Exchange. Its only business is growing tobacco and tea in Malawi and last year it made profits of £593,000 on sales of £1.7 million. Such high margins of almost 35 per cent are but a pale shadow compared with 1977 when over half of the company's turnover of £2½ million was pre-tax profit. Such profits are by no means exceptional among other British companies who operate tea estates in Malawi under conditions not significantly different from those in Ruo. Two other small public companies – Singlo Holdings and Blantyre Tea – and a subsidiary of Booker-McConnell ship tea to Britain, for sale on the Tea Exchange, to be blended into well-known household brands. Blantyre – which, like Ruo is part of the Eastern Produce group (see chart) – made profits of almost £740,000 from sales of £1.7 million last year; the year before pre-tax margins were over 60 per cent. These profits are taxed at just under 50 per cent by the Malawian government but are then remittable to the U.K. to pay dividends.

Such a level of profitability indicates a healthy capacity to improve the lot of the Malawian workforce. However, the companies are investing comparatively little even in the development of their estates: in 1977-78 both Blantyre and Ruo paid out more in dividends than they invested in the estates. Instead, Ruo, for example are building an £80,000 office block in Blantyre, the Malawi capital, and investigating the possibility of going into pig production in Brazil. Blantyre are using their surplus cash to build up their portfolio of quoted investments.

Other companies have used the profits of Malawi to develop their businesses in other ways. Both Singlo Holdings and Eastern Produce have, at times, been the vehicles for various City whizz-kids anxious to make their way to fame and fortune. Tea companies are particularly prone to attract this sort of interest as, with most of their assets tied up in politically unattractive countries, their stock exchange valuation tends to be low. Typically, this makes it possible to acquire effective control of the company cheaply and then to use either its assets or its share quotation to embark on an ambitious programme of diversification. Such has been the fate of Singlo, which bought its profitable Bandanga estate in 1976. Its chairman of five years standing, Michael Slocock, has taken the company into a bewildering mixture of ceramics, preserved fruit and Barnums' carnival novelties. Eastern Produce attracted the attention of financier Oliver Jessell whose acolyte on the board took the company into deep sea fishing. The Jessell shareholding was sold to the current owners after Jessell Securities collapsed. The profit contribution from Malawi – which includes businesses as well as tea – accounted for two-fifths of Eastern Produce's profits last year.

IN DEFENDING ITS LOW PAY, Ruo says that wage levels are fixed by law: something which the Malawian government strenuously denies, even through its spokesman in London. First Secretary of the High Commission in London, Ben Sani, also dismisses the allegations about Ruo as 'unreliable, unrepresentative and malicious.'

Many senior government officials in Malawi are also large land owners and clearly benefit from the absence of free and independent trade unions. In the early seventies many unions were banned and their leaders imprisoned for several years, before being released and forced into exile following international pressure on the government of Dr Hastings Banda (motto: 'Unity, Loyalty, Obedience and Discipline'). Now unions are forbidden to strike or agitate for better conditions; liaison with other African and international labour organisations is prohibited. The unions have become little more than an arm of the Ministry of Labour, with whom they co-operate to

regulate the workforce. Many of the present leaders are government appointees without previous union backgrounds and the current chairman of the Malawi TUC, Justin Liabunya, is former personnel manager of the Cold Storage Commission and now works part-time for one of the tea companies, Booker-McConnell.

Malawian teaworkers, therefore, must look to the international trade union movement for the defence of their interests. Unfortunately, the involvement of the British TUC has been a story of half-heartedness and hesitation. Last September, after visiting Malawi, I sent a copy of a report on Ru0 to the T.U.C. International Committee, asking them to initiate further investigations and to draw trade union and public attention to the situation in Malawi.

It took nearly two months for them to acknowledge my letter and, despite many reminders and much badgering, it was only when I told them that Ru0 was to be the subject of an article in the *Observer* that the TUC produced a proper reply. Thus, six months after receiving my report, Len Murray, General Secretary, wrote:

We have drawn your letter to the attention of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, to which we are affiliated. The ICFTU is well aware of the conditions of tea estate workers in Malawi where it has an affiliated organization, and is contemplating sending a mission there sometime later this year.

The ICFTU's 'affiliated organization' in Malawi exists only on paper and is more an

arm of government control than a representative of the workers' interest, as the TUC knows: genuine trade union leaders expelled by Dr. Banda have had their appeals for assistance from the TUC ignored. And the TUC's own flurry of requests for information when there was a danger of publicity put their claim that the ICFTU was 'well aware' of conditions in Malawi in a curious light.

The TUC's anxiety to see an advance copy of the *Observer* article gave me the impression they were more interested in their own image than the plight of the tea workers. This was reinforced by their abrupt announcement that in future contact was not to be made with the officers of the International Department but with the Press Office. To circumvent what looked like obstruction and stalling, I made direct contact with the ICFTU in Brussels. Soon afterwards I learned that a joint meeting in May of the ICFTU and the plantation workers' union, the IFPAW, had decided to send a delegation to Malawi this summer. When I asked them for more information, the TUC denied (as they still do) that such a meeting took place or that any international delegation had been decided upon. Indeed, it is now not at all clear whether the delegation ever visited Malawi.

As Malawi is a member state of the International Labour Organisation, I asked the organisation's London director, George Foggon, to see if the situation at Ru0 breaks the terms of the ILO Conventions. There seems to be prime facie evidence that condi-

tions at Ru0 contravene several - some of which are ratified by Malawi: 138 Minimum Wage (1973), 119 Guarding Machinery (1963), 110 Plantations (1958), and 99 (ratified) Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery - Agriculture (1951). Furthermore, it can be argued that low pay and sub-standard working conditions at Ru0 are largely attributable to the absence of free and independent trade unions which is a violation of two Conventions ratified by Malawi: 98, Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining (1949) and 11, Right of Association - Agriculture (1921).

According to George Foggon, in the case of unratified Conventions, the ILO has no power to request information or call to account individual Member States, except as part of an approach to all Member States as a worldwide review of a particular Convention. On ratified Conventions, enquiries can only be initiated by employer/employee organisations or by Member States. To date, neither the TUC nor the British government have shown any interest in taking up this option.

Astonishingly, on Conventions 11 and 98, George Foggon can say:

"I have examined the Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations for 1977 and 1978 and Malawi does not feature adversely in either Report".

These ILO Reports are based on submissions by the Malawi government, are not open to public scrutiny and in Malawi there are no free trades unions to act as a check on the undemocratic government.

DEFENCE Robin Cook

The superpowers play cat and mouse with Eurostrategic weapons

SALT II: Will Europe strike back?

WILL SALT II cause European governments to show renewed interest in having their own nuclear weapons? The possibility (raised by Godfrey Hodgson: NS 29 June) may seem a perverse response to a treaty aimed at nuclear restraint, but already two aspects of SALT are being played up to impel European leaders in this direction.

One, freely discussed in public, is the treaty's implicit assumption that the Soviet Union has achieved parity with the US in strategic systems. By custom, NATO has relied on US nuclear supremacy to offset its own perceived inferiority in conventional arms. Yet, nuclear weapons are capable of wreaking such enormous havoc that there is a finite limit to the number of weapons required to devastate any opponent, however many warheads he may possess himself - and both the US and the USSR passed that limit long ago. In reality, it is pointless to speculate which has the more generous overkill: nor is that fundamental truth changed by SALT II, which actually permits both sides to increase their warheads.

There is more weight behind the other argument for going it alone, though it is not generally discussed in public except by Frenchmen. Their thesis is that SALT's real significance is the impact of the process on the relationship between the two superpowers, with dark hints that America might put her new rapport with Russia before her alliance with Europe.

SUPERPOWER UNDERSTANDING is certainly maturing, as is shown by the remark-

ably frank arrangements for SALT verification. The Soviets recently complained that the new environmental shelters which the US was installing on missile silos were making it impossible to tell a Minuteman III from a Minuteman II. On reflection, the US conceded that maybe environmental shelters

could be seen as a breach of their undertakings not to impede satellite spying, and withdrew them.

A cynic might portray this as the value of SALT: the shelters vanish, but the missiles stay put. But the fact that such exchanges are possible demonstrates a large shift in the

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attitudes of the superpowers towards each other. In a simple, trusting world such a frank accord would be treated with relief: in practice, the result is a vague unease in Europe that the leviathans appear to be on a collusion course rather than a collision course.

The Gaullist accusation is that the SALT process is creating 'sanctuaries' against nuclear attack in the superpower heartlands, while leaving Europe as a free-fire zone in which proxy wars can be fought. The suspicion comes naturally to Gaullists, who were devising rationales for a national deterrent long before SALT I. But there is a grain of justice in it. Appended to the treaty proper are two statements about the Backfire bomber. First, Brezhnev assures the US that the USSR will 'not increase the radius of this plane in such a way as to enable it to strike targets on the territory of the USA'. Second, Carter confirms that the US enters into the agreement on the basis of that assurance. This is not far removed from a tacit understanding that the White House will be happy so long as Backfire remains a medium-range bomber only capable of knocking the stuffing out of Europe.

Similar qualms are provoked by the treatment of the SS-20 – a medium-range missile which shares the same launcher as the SS-16, an ICBM capable of reaching America. As satellite cameras cannot distinguish between an SS-20 and an SS-16 the arrival of the SS-20 poses a major verification problem, which has been resolved by a Soviet promise not to deploy the SS-16. Now the US will know that every time they spot an SS-20 launcher they can ignore it as its missile can reach only Birmingham or Düsseldorf.

AMERICAN DIPLOMATS explain at this point that Backfire and the SS-20 are outside SALT because that is what the Europeans wanted at the outset. NATO has traditionally deployed more nuclear weapons in Europe than its opponents, and the continental states were unwilling to risk this element of superiority in negotiations aimed at parity. The USSR has always been willing to include such weapons in SALT, because the planes which America has stationed in Europe threaten the Russian heartland.

Denied the chance to negotiate about such weapons, the logical Soviet response was to produce their own medium-range weapon, capable of surviving attack and delivering warheads with precision on airfields in the European theatre. It is the advent of such a weapon, the SS-20, that has done most to alter European perceptions of the balance of advantage in theatre nuclear weapons.

Its political impact has been most profound on the Germans, who have no nuclear weapon of their own, but are uncomfortably aware of having invited on to their territory the nuclear bases that form the most likely targets of the SS-20. Chancellor Schmidt has identified it as a 'Eurostrategic' threat.

Predictably, NATO has responded by demanding more Eurostrategic weapons of its own. It should not be assumed that Europe has none of these at present. On top of the indigenous British and French forces, there are two US carriers loitering, with nuclear bombers aboard, in European waters. And the number of F-111 strike aircraft on European soil has been substantially increased.

Yet another 450 warheads are available from US submarines committed to battlefield

targets in Europe, and it is their inclusion in the Eurostrategic balance which reveals the artificiality of the concept. Does a Russian who has just seen his city vanish know, or care, whether this is a theatre strike from a Poseidon submarine dedicated to SACEUR or a 'strategic' strike from one of the rest? (A solution I have heard canvassed is the location of all SACEUR submarines in the Mediterranean: so that the Russians could know anything coming from that direction would be Eurostrategic.)

To anyone but a strategic planner, it should be clear that the first use of a Eurostrategic warhead will provoke global holocaust. In the meantime the discovery of a Eurostrategic balance will provide the rationale for a Eurostrategic arms race. Confronted with an

increase in the European nuclear armoury, the Soviet Union will react as it has always done: by beefing-up its own. The Pentagon's response will be to seek to match unilaterally the nuclear forces which the USSR has acquired to maintain parity with the aggregate arsenals of Europe and the US . . . but we have been here before.

An alternative to this would be to try to resolve Schmidt's anxieties by including Eurostrategic weapons in the negotiations for SALT III. There would, of course, be real difficulties in finding a Western position. Would the Senate ever give up US aircraft in Europe in return for limits on Soviet missiles which anyway could not hit America? Would the French accept any limitations on themselves – indeed, would they play at all?

ECONOMIC MONITOR

Edited by David Blackaby

The success of job-creation policies

SPITAELES RELATES the case of the Belgian government which, in June 1977, inherited a (rising) unemployment rate of 6.2 per cent. It implemented a programme aimed at removing 70,000 from the unemployment register: 1) More public authority jobs; 2) Voluntary early retirement; 3) Training for young job-seekers; 4) The creation of a special temporary work force to assist social services and 5) A humanisation of a working conditions programme.

By December 1978, 76,000 people had been found employment under one or other of these measures. Surprisingly, this cost the government nothing and would actually save money in future if the scheme was continued. This was a result of the increase in tax receipts and the reduction in unemployment benefit. The drawbacks to the policy were a decrease in growth caused by the reduction in the active population and a slight increase in inflation. The Belgian government, and Spitaeles, felt the price was worth paying.

(P. Murphy)
(*Unemployment Absorption Programme in Belgium*. Guy Spitaeles, *International Labour Review*, March 1979.)

Big companies and inflation

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM holds that the more competitive an industry, the greater will be the flexibility of prices. Providing new evidence on the relationship between the speed of price changes and industrial market structure, Domberger doubts this. He draws attention to a Monopolies Commission report (1973) which noted the tendency for prices to move in parallel fashion in highly concentrated oligopolistic sectors. Domberger tests the proposition that in concentrated industries, where costs of search and communication are relatively low, any industry costs increase can be quickly co-ordinated and passed on. He estimates price adjustment equations for a sample of industries where it was possible to establish the rate of adjustment and test its relationship with industrial structure.

Domberger's conclusion 'that industrial concentration by raising the speed with which firms react to cost increases could contribute to the inflationary problem in the U.K.', is strengthened by the fact that, due to data limitations, his analysis was unable to capture the most recent increase in concentration due to mergers.

(*Price Adjustment and Market Structure*, S. Domberger, *Economic Journal* March 1979)

Does fine-tuning work?

THIS PAPER assesses the effectiveness of temporary tax measures for economic stabilisation. Typically, tax changes influence the economy through their effect on consumer spending patterns and Dolde emphasises the importance of introducing temporary measures quickly if they are to work. But other factors also influence the consumer's response: the individual's anticipation of the permanence of the tax change, the importance individuals place on future income and the effect of policy on different sections of the community. For instance, cynical observers who doubt the credibility of government are unlikely to believe the temporary (or permanent) nature of specific measures, and those sectors of the community which bear the highest tax burden are those least likely to spend extra income and so have the smallest response to tax changes. Drawing on American evidence, Dolde concludes that there is little economically to favour temporary, rather than indefinite tax changes.

(R. Bladen-Hovell)
(*Temporary Taxes as Macro-Economic Stabilizers*. W. Dolde, *American Economic Review* May 1979)

What makes an economy grow

THIRLWALL ARGUES that the balance of payments has been a much greater constraint on a country's economic growth than hitherto recognised. He contends that an economy's growth rate is determined by the rate at which demand grows and that this is constrained by the balance of payments: the increased volume of imports caused by rising incomes when demand is expanded, must be matched by an increased volume of exports. The balance of payments equilibrium growth rate is therefore determined by the ratio of the rate of growth of exports to the responsiveness of imports to increases in income.

Thirlwall produces convincing evidence to support his conclusions. He calculates the equilibrium growth rates for fifteen countries and finds they match very closely the observed growth rates. The lowest is for the U.K.: at 2.95 per cent it corresponds to an actual growth rate of 2.71 per cent. The policy implications are clear: countries should export goods for which world demand is rising rapidly and reduce the response of imports to increases in income.

(R. Apps)
(*The Balance of Payments Constraint as an Explanation of International Growth Rate Differences*, A. P. Thirlwall. *Banca Nazionale del Lavoro Quarterly Review*, March 1979.)

London Diary

□ Experience investigating air-crashes convinced me ages ago that 'Lloyd's of London' is merely the front-name for a mob of upper-class bookies with a mild talent for PR. Now, the wondrous computer-leasing scandal demonstrates that these people are amateurs even in the praxis of gambling. This, as the properly-educated know, is classically laid-out in the works of Damon Runyon, especially *The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown* (vulg., *Guys & Dolls*), concerning the super-punter Sky Masterson, whose father advances the rule that in your passage through life you will inevitably meet someone who offers to bet that he can make the jack of spades jump up and squirt cider in your ears. 'Son', says the father, 'do not bet him, because as sure as you do you will get an ear full of cider'.

Formally, what 50-odd Lloyd's syndicates did was insure American computer-leasing companies against customers revoking their leases. This is something computer-users are apt to do every time computer-technology advances somewhat: therefore, computer-leasing is an intensely hairy line of work. The news that Lloyd's were selling protection caused quite a rush, and in no time a billion dollars' worth of leases had been covered. Much of this 'insuring' was done in 1975-6, when the all-conquering IBM 370 computers (born 1970) were in late middle-age. Lloyd's therefore were betting that the US computer business would stand still for several years: few surer means could be devised for attracting an earful of cider. IBM's new series arrived in 1977, and the inevitable, gigantic lawsuits are just reaching fruition. If we are to have privately-owned insurance concerns, I suggest their members be regularly examined to ensure they have basic familiarity with the business principles laid down by Sky Masterson, Sam the Gonoph and Nathan Detroit.

□ 'I suppose', said Dick Clements, editor of *Tribune*, 'that as you won, you'll be writing a column about it.' I am indeed glad to report that the NS cricket team, having warmed-up for the season by trouncing the forces of capitalism (the CBI), achieved victory last Sunday in the annual fiercely-contested match against *Tribune*. The chief ingredients of success were a resolute innings from the cartoonist Minnion (we were, at one horrendous moment, 5/21), and a formidable spell by our general manager, Peter Jones, who removed eight *Tribune*ites, all of them clean-bowled.¹ My own theory is that the interrupting of *Tribune*'s run of success owes much to a change of venue: recently, matches have been played on the grounds of King Alfred's, a North London public school with which *Tribune* seems to have some dynastic connection. On Sunday we played at Goldsmiths' College, a well-kept part of the public-education system: socialist reflexes, naturally, were powerfully stimulated by this ambience. The aspect of the ground which most pleased my children was a superlative swinging-rope: pendent from a large tree over a grassy slope, it enabled them to project themselves into Tarzanesque arcs of the most heart-stopping description. I am, however, curious as to its

¹ The editors of *Wisden* will probably wish to note that both sides were playing 13 men.

role in an institution of higher learning. Can it be that our Chairman, Richard Hoggart, who is also Warden of Goldsmiths', slips out of an evening to swing himself refreshingly into space – uttering, meanwhile, an ape-like howl or two, as a release from the burdens of educational administration?

□ I can assist *Guardian* readers unhorsed last week by a sharp discontinuity in the surface of Peter Jenkins. Having begun with a tolerably deferential account of Thatcherish foreign-policy, his column went suddenly Blimp. Britain, it barked, should forget about legal and moral responsibility over Rhodesia. We had none. And anyway, who cared?

There is little to choose between most of the black regimes of Africa, and little to choose between the dubiously independent Muzorewa regime and the dubiously democratic ... Patriotic Front.

Peter ought to test his idea about all black African regimes being much the same by going and insulting the head man in (a) Tanzania, (b) Nigeria and (c) the Central African Republic (an experiment not feasible in reverse order). Last Wednesday, at the launch-party for William Shawcross's *Sideshow*, he was taxed with the fact that the second half of his column was, firstly, deplorable and, secondly, disconnected from the rest. Well, said Jenkins, he had written the first half in the morning: it was only over lunch that the irrelevance of Rhodesia occurred to him. Might we have a left-wing press if no-one in Fleet Street was allowed out to lunch?

□ I met the other night Barry Commoner, the American scientist who some ten years back put much of the original impetus into the present wave of ecological concern. I had thought him apolitical, but it turns out he is an adroit practitioner of the quintessentially American art of political camouflage. He was explaining that the energy crisis should be handled by nationalising the oil companies – not what you usually hear from solid professors at Washington University, St Louis. 'Are you a socialist?' asked my wife. 'No', he said, 'I'm a biologist'. Commoner is, of course, a socialist: intelligently aware that in America you can put up any idea you like so long as you make it sound like a technical proposition rather than a political one.

I am not sure it is a good idea to have a politics in which the form is always the same, even when the content is different. However, it may be preferable to the politics we have in Britain, where you can vary the form as much as you like, but the content is always the same old conservatism.

□ We receive many complaints these days about the insanely leftist bias of the *NEW STATESMAN* – our advocacy of Labour Party democracy, reform of the tax system, and other measures calculated to turn the moon to blood. The view is strongly held among those who view Jim Callaghan as a contemporary Pericles (we have been cheerily informed that Merlyn Rees denounces us regularly at meetings with his constituency party). Internally, however, we are concerned to note a growing congruity between our editorial line and that of the *Financial Times*. We have wondered if it might be *us* moving towards *them* – should the subject happen to be the operations of the secondary-banking sector,

or the grotesquely costly way in which the Bank of England finances public spending. However Monday's *FT* leader made it quite clear that the process is in the opposite direction: calling, as it did, for a Socialist government in Italy (with Communist support) in order to tackle the burdens which have fallen on

millions of non-protected workers in the 'submerged economy' and on the poor generally ... hard-hit by the failure of government to provide an adequate health and social-security service.

I assume that this article (written, no doubt, before lunch in accordance with Jenkins' Law, *supra*) marks the formal accession of the *FT* to the Left. How is William Rees-Mogg going to take it?

There remains one issue on which we hope to persuade the comrades at Bracken House to see reason. Recently the Prime Minister pointed out that the building societies were behaving outrageously by threatening to increase their interest-rates while in possession of large liquid reserves (this has had the beneficial, if customer-baffling effect of causing the societies to hold their rate down while claiming they are putting it up). It was wholly predictable that Mrs Thatcher's stateswomanly gesture should have been attacked by the arch-reactionary Denis Healey (who accused her of 'hen-pecking' the building societies). It was regrettable, however, to see the *FT* join in the chorus, and it is to be hoped that wiser counsels will shortly prevail.

Bruce Page

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

□ I was a dunce at Mathematics and Banty Gibbard used a sort of refined torture on me. He leaned over me as I was attempting some problems in algebra and if I was getting it wrong, he fixed the two ends of the clasp of his key ring on the lobe of my ear and increased pressure until I cried out in pain. At his funeral there were no family mourners, but a full church paid tribute to an unselfish and kindly man. – *Old Kimboltonian Newsletter* (L.W. Allington)

□ A proposal to ban smoking for the first hour of council meetings was defeated at a South Staffordshire District Council environmental health committee meeting last night. Councillor Maurice Jones said that to stop people smoking was an invasion of privacy. 'If we are going to let this happen, we might as well sit back and let the Russians take over.' – *Wolverhampton Express and Star* (J.E. Roberts)

□ Come home to a loony bin! Lots of fun fur fabric 'loony' that sits on your bedroom chair or dressing table. Inside him there's an actual WASTE PAPER BIN. If you wish, remove the tin and your loony becomes an enjoyable pyjama or nightie case! Orange and Brown, or Red and White. – Special offer on packet of Kellogg's Rice Krispies. (Michael Rubinstein)

□ British undertakers say that today's corpses keep much longer than they used to because of the preservatives in our diet. – *Guardian* (J. Kelsey)

□ The personnel manager of the company, Mr Ronald Timms, told the tribunal: 'I accept we are living in 1979 but there are certain times and places for this sort of thing, and it should not be done in a jeweller's shop. We had to take action over things like cavorting and rollicking on the floor, crotch-lifting and physical injury to other people.' – *Daily Telegraph* (Sheila Burns)

More equal than others

Sir, There is one aspect of the Thorpe case which has not yet been commented upon. The whole trial was a clear demonstration of the kid glove treatment handed out by the judicial system to the rich and famous, compared to the heavy boot it presents to working people.

Remember the case in Shrewsbury in 1973, where a number of workers including Des Warren and Eric Tomlinson had organised a flying picket? Evidence was presented in court that a window had been broken (not by Warren or Tomlinson), a picket (not Warren or Tomlinson) had waved a plank about and a concrete mixer had been overturned, during a bit of pushing and shoving, by persons unknown. Witnesses stated that they had been fearful, therefore, the prosecution argued, there had been 'intimidation' during the picketing. Because Tomlinson and Warren had organised the picketing, they were deemed to be technically guilty (though not personally involved in the incidents) of conspiracy to intimidate. For this distant, vague, unpremeditated, technical offence they were given (and served) 2 years and 3 years in prison.

ARTHUR BRAGG

112 Ritherdon Road
London SW17

Oh, your love!

Sir, One of the more bizarre remarks of Mr Justice Cantley — in addition to those you report — in his summing up at the Thorpe trial — was 'leaning forward to the jury', and saying: 'I miss you ... I would not write that to a man, but I may have written something like that to a girl.' The inference was clear.

On 20 October 1924, Mahatma Gandhi wrote to the Anglican priest Charles Freer Andrews: 'I have missed you every moment today. Oh, your love!' (C. F. Andrews by Bernarsidas Chaturvedi and Marjorie Sykes p. 207.) I wonder what Mr Justice Cantley would say that says about Gandhi — and not only Gandhi.

ERIC JAMES
Director

Christian Action
15 Blackfriars Lane
London EC4

Abortion myths

Sir, Observers of the silly season will be interested to note that it has started. C. B. Goodhart (Letters 6 July) is quite correct to state that there were 1800 abortions at or after 20 weeks gestation during 1975. However, to allege that perspective is created by comparing this figure with the number of deaths in women from motor vehicle accidents is questionable.

Although no-one is in favour of late abortions per se, simply to label them as a bad thing and hope that, with the help of a more restrictive legislation on abortion, they will go away, is not very constructive. Before castigating those women who obtain abortions after 20 weeks of gestation, it is important to obtain further information about their reasons for not obtaining an earlier and safer operation. The Lane Committee found that the underlying reason for a substantial proportion of late abortions lay in the difficulties which the women had encountered in attempting to find their way through the obstacle race to an NHS abortion.

For example, although women under 20 years of age account for only 25% of all abortions, they account for 41% of 20-23 week and 32% of 24+ week operations. When the same analysis is carried out for women under 16 years of age, their over-representation in the later abortions after 20 weeks is even more marked. These are exactly the women who it would be predicted might have difficulties in playing the NHS system.

Overall only 50% of the abortions on women resident in England and Wales are carried out in NHS hospitals and clinics. Within this there is

considerable regional variation — from 100% NHS abortions in the North Region to 14% in the West Midlands Region. Thus although 50,000 women were deemed in 1976 to have adequate grounds for an abortion, they were unable to obtain this through the NHS.

Finally, it should be made clear that 16% of abortions at 20-23 weeks and 27% of abortions at 24+ weeks are performed because of the risks to the life of the mother, to her existing children or that the foetus is abnormal. It is not valid to assume that these foetuses would ever have been capable of independent life.

To talk of 'unintentionally killing some 1800 children' does nothing to help the 1800 women who undergo this traumatic operation. It is important to look at why abortion is necessary after 20 weeks gestation, and, where it seems to be preventable, to achieve this not by restricting the Abortion Act but by improving women's access to early and safe NHS abortions.

SHEILA ADAM

3 Horwood Close
Headington
Oxford

Colonel Blimps

Sir, Mr George Sheerin (Letters, 13 July) reminds me that the ancient province of Ulster had nine counties in it. He seems not to know that nowadays the terms 'Ulster' and 'Northern Ireland' are everywhere used interchangeably without ambiguity.

Er, you couldn't have known that either, could you? Or you wouldn't have printed his letter, would you? Or would you?

KINGSLEY AMIS

Gardnor House
Flask Walk
London NW3

Mr Amis appears to believe that we exclude from the letters page all those with whose views we disagree, or whose comments we find pedantic. If this were the case, Mr Amis would himself have been banned long ago on both counts.

Slaving away

Sir, The tone of academic hauteur which suffuses the latest letter you publish from Hugh Brogan (NS 6 July) must not be allowed to mislead anyone into thinking that modern scholarship lends support to the thesis that Castlereagh made an outstanding contribution to abolitionism. The only work to which Brogan refers is a deeply respectful study by Sir Charles Webster written some fifty years ago, a monument to traditional British diplomatic historiography. Since that time the history of abolition, with which Webster was not centrally concerned, has been quite transformed by the researches of such scholars as Roger Anstey, Seymour Drescher and David Brion Davis — the latter's *Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* is a particularly brilliant and subtle analysis of abolitionism inspired by the categories of Gramsci's Marxism. In none of this work is any basis to be found for the extraordinary claims made by Brogan. Thus in Drescher's *Econocide* (University of Pittsburgh Press 1977) it is made abundantly clear that Castlereagh's diplomacy in 1814 was the chief target of abolitionist polemics: 'When Wilberforce rose to speak it was to announce that Castlereagh had brought back the angel of death under the wings of victory. The minister held in his hand not the instrument of universal relief but "the death warrant of a multitude of innocent victims, men, women, and children" in Africa and the slave colonies. Articles of the treaty (i.e. the Treaty of Paris) restored to French sovereignty all colonies and establishments in French possession as of January 1792 except Tobago, St. Lucia, and Mauritius (Ile de France). French sovereignty over Sainte Domingue (Haiti) was recognised, along with the developed islands of

Martinique and Guadeloupe ... Finally under 'additional' article 1, the British government officially sanctioned the reopening of the French slave trade for five years. ... For Castlereagh and the government, Britain's chief priority was to insure the durability of peace and the equilibrium of Europe. Colonial cessions to France were part of a strategy "fully to open to France the means of peaceful occupation and to transform her from a conquering and a military to a commercial and a pacific nation." Permanent peace required capitalism. French capitalism apparently required the slave trade for the time being.' (p. 152-3.)

The outburst of public indignation against Castlereagh, and the circumstance that Napoleon declared the abolition of the French slave trade during his 'Hundred Days', eventually obliged Castlereagh to secure the empty convention of 1815 and to press the restored Bourbon regime for an abolition law. Some abolitionists were mollified, but they soon discovered their error with the renewal of a vigorous slave trade to the French colonies, to Cuba and to Brazil, none of which was inhibited by the 1815 Convention. David Brion Davis, after cataloguing 'the failures of British diplomacy in the period had brought to an end certain naive hopes. A series of defeats and disappointments ... showed that more would be required than a simple appeal to rulers, begging them to choose the path of virtue.' (*Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, p. 72). Since Margaret Thatcher and Lord Carrington are now seeking to emulate Castlereagh's murderous diplomatic illusionism in Central and Southern Africa we should be particularly wary of attempts to resuscitate the 'naive hopes' of 1815, such as that made by Hugh Brogan.

I will pass rapidly over Brogan's allegations of inaccuracy and distortion since they are unsubstantiated. Marxists have no need to exaggerate the misdeeds of a ruling class whose infamy is already more than sufficient to condemn it, nor do they regard the bourgeoisie as one reactionary mass throughout all history. If Brogan wishes to find something worth defending in British ruling class politics of the early 19th century he should abandon Castlereagh, whose grim record cannot be rescued by any amount of 'shading', and adopt a more positive attitude towards those he dismisses as 'worthies' — a curious term to apply to such as Charles James Fox, James Stephen and Lord Brougham, who laboured so effectively in the abolitionist cause.

But let us give Brogan the benefit of the doubt and assume that his claims for Castlereagh were made from honest ignorance. It is also true that Paul Foot has yet to explain his particular judgements on Wilberforce and Castlereagh. Since Brogan proclaims himself a 'liberal socialist' (?) perhaps the best way to thrash out the real issues at stake in this dispute would be to hold a public discussion between the contending parties around the theme 'Wilberforce, Castlereagh and the lessons of British abolitionism'. Paul Foot tells me he would be glad to defend his views at such an encounter and doubtless suitable premises could be found at the University of Essex.

ROBIN BLACKBURN

10 Eccleston Square
London SW1.

Papal prejudice

Sir, It is none of my business to defend the Pope's good name from John Pilger's diatribe (NS 15 June), but may I defend religious journalism from the bad name it will deserve if the standard is no higher. It is because religion stirs such deep prejudices and strong emotion that one has to be careful not to wander outside the limits of accurate analysis of hard facts, with as little personal opinion as possible.

I wasn't, alas, in Poland; but I can claim to have read all the present Pope's important utterances since his election, and it is my business to stay as closely in touch with developments in the Vatican

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and the Roman Catholic Church as I can. If Pope John Paul II really does turn out to be awful, an oppressive enemy of civilised values, let us say so quite clearly. At the moment one can only suspend judgment — some of the signs are promising, some disappointing, and only time will tell.

It is not true to say: 'Since his installation as Pope, his considerable energies have been directed almost exclusively to shoring up the archaic fortress of the Catholic church...' nor is it true that 'in the short time since Karol Wojtyla became Pope he has wasted no time in condemning all the main liberalising forces within the church'.

It is sheer prejudice to refer to the Vatican's interests in Poland as 'spiritual imperialism', an attempted carve-up between the Vatican and Kremlin calculated to subdue and tame the Polish people'. This, and John Pilger's sneer at 'a queue of passive sinners waiting their turn' at improvised confessional booths, was worthy of Dr Paisley.

As a point of view which your readers could take or leave as they wished, knowing the facts, John Pilger's article was fair enough, I suppose, though it did remind me of the saying that 'anti-Popery is the residual religion of the English'. But as the only serious report on current religious events you have published for some time, it appalled me. The standards of religious journalism should be no lower than those of other specialities, surely, and in view of the inherently controversial nature of the subject they should preferably be much higher.

CLIFFORD LONGLEY
Religious Affairs Correspondent

The Times
New Printing House Square
London WC1

On their knees

Sir, I have noticed lately that radio interviewers of senior government personnel have taken to addressing the latter as Sir, instead of the old Well Minister, or just plain You, generally used for members of the last government. (Latest example, interview of Nicholas Ridley, World at One News, 6 July.)

Is this a sort of forelock tugging, motivated by awe of the Lords and other plummy voices now commonly speaking from the chairs of power? Yet often, the verbal genuflection seems to be less than willing, when it comes out as a strangled, abbreviated 'Suh'.

R. B. TAYLOR

29 Merton Hall Road
London SW19

Oilgate revisited

Sir, Martin Bailey's item on oil embargoes (NS 6 July) seemed to imply that crude oil which Conoco sold to BP was delivered to South Africa and that foreign government regulations had been disregarded.

He is wrong on both counts.

All of the crude oil BP has purchased from Conoco under the short term commercial exchange agreement referred to, was delivered to Japan and Singapore. Furthermore, Conoco has not supplied crude oil to South Africa under any arrangements with BP or any other company.

It is Conoco's policy to observe the applicable laws and regulations of the countries in which it operates.

COLIN H. LEE
Vice President,
Supply and Trading

Conoco Inc.
Houston, Texas

Martin Bailey replies: In my article I claimed that a swap arrangement had just been made between BP and Conoco for the supply of oil to South Africa — I did not state that Conoco oil from Indonesia had actually yet reached South Africa.

Dr David Owen himself has confirmed in a letter to Lord Carrington that when he was Foreign

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Secretary BP 'specifically asked for authorisation to pass North Sea oil to Conoco as an exchange for Conoco passing oil to South Africa.' The Labour government's refusal to authorise this swap was recently reversed by the new Conservative administration. Then a few weeks ago BP signed a 'short term commercial exchange agreement' with Conoco.

The fact that BP reportedly diverted these shipments to Japan and Singapore (which is itself not far off the sea route to Durban) does not necessarily mean that these consignments from Indonesia were not part of a more complicated swap deal for South Africa.

It is also possible that BP may initially have made the swap with Conoco in order to supply South Africa but later made alternative arrangements after it had considered the full political implications of sending oil to Durban.

What is undisputed, however, is that BP sought authorisation from the British government to make the swap arrangement with Conoco to supply its South African subsidiary.

Dust in the mines

Sir, Ruth Hall, enumerating possible environmental carcinogens (London Diary, 6 July), writes '... not to mention coal dust, so vigorously intensified by new machinery in the mining industry...' It is a pity that a fine phrase should be put to unworthy use. The reduction of the dust hazard in coal mining is one of the technical success stories of the industry. Modern mining machines are designed in the light of decades of research into the dust-making process, and are much less 'dusty' than their predecessors. Among matters which have been the subject of detailed studies are the proper design of cutting tools and the best speeds of cutting. In addition the modern power-loader has built-in plumbing to take water (still the most potent suppression medium) to the exact site of the cut, and extraction devices to

suck out the dust that succeeds in getting into the air.

The pay-off of much dedicated work, costing tens of millions of pounds, is exemplified by a recent finding of the NCB's Chief Medical Officer, Dr J. S. McIntock: among men under the age of 35, pneumoconiosis has been virtually eradicated in British mines. There can never be complacency about dust, but let there be fair appraisal, and not thoughtless denigration, of what has already been achieved.

IVOR EVANS
Deputy Director (Mining Sciences)
Mining Research & Development Establishment
National Coal Board
Burton-on-Trent, Staffs

Why Cromwell?

Sir, I am interested to see from your leader (NS 29 June) that you consider the Conservative Party to be composed of 'gentlemen of spirit' and the Labour Party leadership to be dominated by people employed in the service and catering trades. But why drag Cromwell into a discussion of the internal democratisation of the Labour Party? Even by seventeenth century standards he was no democrat. He was a military dictator who ruled for eleven years without holding an election. In its historical context his role may have been 'progressive', for he led the fighting arm of the City of London in a violent phase of the long process of transition from feudalism to capitalism; but Socialists who admire Puritans should remember that the Protestant ethic is a close relation of the spirit of capitalism. As Sellars and Yeatman should have said, the Roundheads were both Repulsive and Rong.

DAPHNE PHILLIPS

260 Wendover
Thurlow Street,
London SE17

SIDESHOW

William Shawcross

Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia

'This is a thrilling book... It teems with anecdote and revelation. It will unloose bitter debate. It conveys us like a hurtling train towards the inevitable disaster.' **JOHN LE CARRÉ**

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ANDRE DEUTSCH

Gathered together

There is considerable free entertainment and enlightenment to be obtained and treasured merely by watching and listening to the human race at its most characteristic and in this respect the British, so pleasingly individual in almost every possible way, are to be found at their dazzling best when it comes to attendance at a really slap-up funeral. Incidentally, my newspaper informs me, basing the statement on who knows what tireless research, that even the cheapest interment now 'works out at' around £300, so do be sure that you get your full money's worth. And in this country, where in such matters propriety and decorum largely reign, we need hardly fear that the solemn proceedings will be loudly interrupted, as has recently occurred in America, by the undertaker's insulting announcement in the very middle of the sorrowful ceremony that the dear departed wasn't going to depart one step further from church to cemetery until he had seen the colour of the relations' cash. Actual cash, he meant, for the cheque proffered had had a bounceable look about it.

The great and really advantageous thing about a funeral is the sense of relief that fills the air, expressed in cosy cliché ('It's how Muriel would have wished to go') after cosy cliché ('Muriel would have hated to become a burden to anybody'). Not that nobody grieves for Muriel, far from it, but the five days that lead up to the funeral are always a trying time of waiting ('Muriel loathed having a fuss made of her') and now, after the slow purring of the limousined cortège ('My dear, have you ever seen so many Daimlers!'), the church and crematorium services are well under way and a look of profound relief is to be observed on every face. And afterwards, with the first comforting sips of slightly warm sherry and the munching of sausage rolls ('How Muriel adored them! I can see her now...'), everybody cheers up like anything. And the future too looks bright for some ('I know Dot won't forget that Muriel wanted me to have her writing-desk. In fact, Muriel always referred to it as 'your' desk, bless her.').

If funerals provide a feeling of relief, a large number of weddings merely produce one of almost total apprehension and gloom. There is nothing heart-lifting about the sight of the frail young pair setting out, white-faced and trembling, down Life's perilous dual carriage-way with its multiple-pile-ups ahead and its fog warnings and its calamities at Newport Pagnell. Nor is that all. There are countless trials that a sensitive guest must face — the fearful jocularities, the dreadful speeches, the reading of the merry telegrams, each one in worse taste than the last ('Good old Bimbo!'), the report in the local paper ('The bride's mother made a charming picture in crushed strawberry velveteen with nigger accessories'). There is something to be said for the pop of champagne corks but why do the sides of a marquee always flap in the wind like Mr Heath rounding The Needles? I prefer not to think of the appalling new hats on every female head, not to speak of the display of wedding gifts ('I don't seem to be able to spot our biscuit barrel. Oh there it is, right at the back behind that crinoline lady table lamp.')

In a lyric of *Pacific 1860*, Mr Coward provided a line which went 'There's nothing very nice about relations throwing rice about' and one would not attempt to quarrel with the statement. Then comes the deflating wait while the bride gets into her going-away togs ('Such a mistake to choose beige'), followed by the objects tied on to the motor-car and the pointless caginess about the honeymoon venue ('Cynthia absolutely swore me to secrecy but it's to be Shanklin'). In the days of the sadly defunct 'Happy Magazine', always chock-a-block with easily comprehensible side-splitters and multi-coloured illustrations to accompany them, jokes concerning honeymoon couples figured frequently and the registration number of their going-away car was invariably 'O.U.2.' Oh indeed.

Marriage, however, though considerably less popular than it once was now that the phrase 'they're living together' no longer produces gasps of horror, hands pressed to heaving bosoms ('Quick, Maud, my salts!') and faces drained of colour and, if uttered at meal-times '*pas devant les domestiques*', has clearly come to stay and those who wish to bone up on its past history and its many pictorial splendours and, perhaps, wonder where they themselves went wrong, can do no better than purchase, at a cost of £5.95, Elizabeth Laverack's *With This Ring*, an account, published by Elm Tree Books, of the wedding ceremony (before, during and after) over the last century. There are several thought-provoking snaps of photographically posed couples waiting for the off, couples smiling cheerily, couples smiling bravely, couples gazing at each other with a look of wild surmise, couples knee-deep in relations or

Roger Woddis

Hang the Whale!

Let the savage whale be slaughtered,
Hung, garrotted, drawn and quartered,
And its carcase cut to pieces
As a warning to the rest!
Back the Japanese and Russians,
Down with blubbery discussions,
For the so-called threatened species
Is an anti-social pest!

Scott is just too bloody gentle,
Spike is soft and sentimental:
Who is goon and who knight-errant?
Kill the terror of the deep!
Drag him crying through the shallows,
Let him die upon the gallows,
Use the ultimate deterrent
While the wildlife weirdos weep!

Why accuse us of despoiling,
When our motor-cars need oiling?
Save the consecrated dipstick.
Guard the gear-box that we love!
Think of starving hordes in Asia
Needing protein from Cetacea,
Not to speak of ladies' lipstick
And the softened leather glove!

bouquets or bridesmaids or syringa and smilax or cake or dour old grannies, grim disapproval visible in every wrinkle.

Useful courting tips are everywhere. *The Brides Book* of 1901 warns of the various terms in which proposals of marriage may be couched, from 'the vague' to 'the graceful' (on a boating picnic, what can be nicer or subtler than 'How delightful, Millicent, if we could only glide down the stream of life together', though you've got to be on the alert to catch his drift). *The Golden Guide to Matrimony* (1882) seems surprisingly outspoken in its advice to a young man seeking a wife ('Mind where you pick her up'). Miss Laverack even provides a helpful chapter on elopements (the most spirited elopement of which I have personal knowledge involved, long ago, a clergyman's daughter of my acquaintance who bravely clambered down a night-time ladder taking with her, not only her 'personal things' but also an aunt and her mother's maid, just in case one needed a button sewing on, don't you know.) *The Ladies Pictorial* gave details of the minimum requirements for the bride's trousseau (six pairs of combinations are, quite frankly, an absolute 'must' and girls are urgently begged never to wear pyjamas, 'even on a honeymoon', whatever that may mean). If you don't yourself happen to have easy access to a copy of the *Bradford Wedding Journal* of 1911, let me tell you that they warmly recommend for tasteful bridesmaids' dresses 'maize-coloured charmeuse, with chiffon overdresses and amber beads in a trellis design.' How fascinating to discover, not only that any self-respecting bride of 1874 wore canvas elastic-sided boots decorated with cream satin ribbon rosettes, but that Attila the Hun indulged, on his nuptial night, so freely in hydromel (fermented honey, you know) that he passed not only out but away before he could make even a half attempt at the main event of the evening. A sobering lesson for all.

Superstitions abound. According to the *Book of Days*, nothing but disaster would follow if, on the way to the church, the bridal party were to meet any of the following — serpent, cat, monk, lizard, priest ('Mornin', padre') or hare. On the other hand, wolves, spiders and toads, either singly or in bulk, were just fine. Well then, the colour of the bride's dress was vital. Married in white ('You have chosen all right'). Married in green ('Ashamed to be seen'). Red was particularly hopeless ('You will wish yourself dead'). The month of the wedding was important too. January and May are pretty good. Avoid October. A June bride was said to be 'impetuous and generous' and also, one supposes, rather warm in sultry weather. Let the wedding be early in the week rather than late ('Thursday for losses, Friday for crosses').

When considering, in depth this time, the subject of suitable wedding presents, we naturally fly once more to that arbiter of good taste, the *Bradford Wedding Journal*. The suggested gifts, always described in the local press as 'numerous and costly tributes' range from a grand piano, a harp, a carriage, 'a service of choice porcelain' and a holiday at Rapallo to that popular tea-time contraption, a two-tier cake-dish at 3s 6d (the one-tier could be snapped up for 2s 3d). Did elopers I wonder, affianced to Mr X but planning to bolt with Mr Y, make sure of wedding presents (non-returnable) before setting off? Not easy to get a harp down a ladder unless, of course, you wisely take a maid to help you.

BOOKS IN GENERAL

Christopher Hitchens

Hope Through Despair

Albert Camus: A Biography by HERBERT R. LOTTMAN Weidenfeld £12.50

Once, in an access of irritation with his small son Jean, Camus ordered him from the supper table to bed. 'Good night, minor writer of no importance,' muttered the child as he withdrew. Camus was easily hurt by bad notices, and had a long memory for feuds. Sartre was probably right to say of him that 'he had a little Algiers roughneck side'. But the prickliness and the vanity, which disfigured many of the disputes which he conducted in his life, seem more and more irrelevant with the lapse of years. Camus would not fit; every attempt to categorise him left a noticeable penumbra, a jagged outline around the figure. In his labour of love, Herbert Lottman has tidied up a 'great number of old rows and given us a clearer look at Camus' real importance.

For over a decade, argument concerning him has been caught in a boring and artificial dichotomy. There are those who claim to revere him for his apolitical artistry and his deep humanity, while in fact marking him up for his anti-Communism. And there are those who reply that he funk'd the only moral issue which ever touched him personally because he never came out for the Algerian FLN. In many ways the repetitiveness of these polemics recall the various posthumous efforts to conscript George Orwell – with whom there are some other suggestive parallels.

For example, Conor Cruise O'Brien manages to suggest (by a very slight elision in his book) that Camus was part of the CIA-sponsored offensive of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. In fact, he adopted the same policy towards that organisation as he did to Communist front groups. In politics, his friends tended to be of the unorganised far left – not unlike Orwell's Catalan revolutionaries. He was always available to help Republican Spain, as he was to intercede for imprisoned Greek Communists or victimised Hungarians and Czechs. The stoutest defence of his Nobel Prize award – which was elsewhere blurred by Cold War barracking of all kinds – came in the review *Révolution Proletarienne*. The article was entitled 'Albert Camus, Un Copain'.

The wavering over Algeria, which looks more rather than less damaging nowadays, was certainly less disgraceful than the retreats made by some (such as the French Communist Party) who had less excuse. We know from Lottman that Camus was more engaged than he let on – FLN militants recall that he offered them shelter in his house, and that he spoke to them at rallies in Algiers with Fascist settlers baying at the doors. His position and his tactics were far more intricate and complex than have usually been allowed (after all, he left the Algerian CP because it downplayed Arab nationalism). But he certainly did get it wrong, and did commit himself to statements, like the celebrated one about defending his mother above justice, which made him look a prig.

New Statesman 20 July 1979

Could it be fair to say that he mistook reality in Algeria because he *minded* about it so much? Even O'Brien concedes that Sartre's position, though superior politically, was much easier personally. Camus knew and loved the Algerians; even in the 1930s we find him putting on integrated productions of Malraux's plays in Algiers itself, in the company of two fine old fellow-travellers named Bourgeois and Poignant. His errors were not all that rank if one bears his commitment in mind.

Much ridicule has been poured on Camus'



idea of the Mediterranean as the civilising measure of humanity. As a philosophical scheme it obviously lacks depth, and it clearly finds its counterpart in his personal dislike of Germany and the North. I think it does contain some clues to his Algerian stand – the hope that French and Arab culture might fertilise each other was always accompanied by the insistence that the two peoples should be equal. It was in the beautiful Roman-Algerian seaside town of Tipaza that he decided to join the Communist Party; whatever the symbolism here, it most certainly is not colonialist. Likewise, his admiration for Kazantzakis, and even his feeling that Fascism and Communism were tempered once they got to Italy and Yugoslavia: these may be idealistic but are not *intuitively* inhuman or stupid.

As he eluded classification politically, so Camus kept surprising the critics with his fictions. No sooner had they concluded that he had become formalistic and dry than he hit them between the eyes with *La Chute*. Claude de Fréminville, in a letter on the young

Camus, concluded that he 'continues to *think* despair, even to write it; but he *lives* hope'. It was this contrast, which may remind some people of Gramsci's famous 'pessimism of the intellect; optimism of the will', which gave rise to much of what is misleadingly called 'the Absurd'.

Camus had a knack for noticing grotesque things – not just in individuals but in attitudes. A great deal of it he kept to himself. Lottman has a good example; that of Camus, vanquished in a public exchange with Sartre and Jeanson, taking revenge in his journal by writing, '*Temps Modernes*. They admit sin and refuse grace'. His lifelong obsession with capital punishment, and his bitter opposition to it in literature and in life, was another source of unhappy reflection. One can surmise his reaction, when proposing a petition against political executions, on being told by Simone de Beauvoir that those were the only sort she *did* believe in. Lottman makes it plain that the guillotining in *La Peste* is indeed rooted in an experience undergone by Camus' father; the pungent feeling of disgust was not something he could vary from case to case.

All of Camus' involvements were essentially reluctant, which is why he is often remembered with resentment by those to whom politics was the stuff of life. He cannot have been a very *sortable* comrade, and the chapters on his journalistic period, especially with Claude Bourdet on *Combat*, show him to have been a spiky and difficult colleague even when things were going well. Again, there is an echo of Orwell here.

In this country, the phrase 'we are all guilty' is taken by reactionaries as the acme of bleeding-heart leftist doublethink. Camus didn't find it a joke phrase at all, and perhaps if Britain had endured Nazi occupation there would be fewer to sneer at it here. He would often, when on public platforms, tell the story of the concierge in the Gestapo headquarters, doing her cleaning every morning amid the victims of torture and explaining, 'I never pay attention to what my tenants do.' His post-resistance journal contains the entry:

Temptation to flee and to accept the decadence of one's era. Solitude makes me happy. But feeling also that decadence begins from the moment when one accepts. And one remains – so that man can remain on the heights where he belongs . . . But nauseous disgust for this dispersion in others.

Lottman has written a brilliant and absorbing book, which supplies new insight simply by including all the light and shade. The detail and the care is extraordinary; further slipshod generalisations about Camus will simply not be tolerable from now on. Now at least we have a clear voice about the importance of liberty and the importance of being concrete about it. Here is what he said at a joint rally of French and Spanish trade unionists in 1953:

If someone takes away your bread, he suppresses your freedom at the same time. But if someone seizes your freedom, rest assured, your bread is threatened, because it no longer depends on you and your struggle, but on the pleasure of a master.

For all the occasional pomposity and introspection, for all the ambiguities over certain personal and political crises, the evidence is that Camus laboured in the spirit of that declaration. In *L'Exil et le Royaume*, when Jonas's last message cannot be deciphered as between *solidaire* and *solitaire*, the irony of the two words now seems neither absurd nor self-indulgent, but realistic and necessary.

Round the Bend

The Theology of Medicine, The Myth of Psychotherapy and Schizophrenia by THOMAS SZASZ Oxford £5.75, £5.95 and £5.95

Millions of people believe that psychiatric illnesses exist. To Szasz this is an evil, pernicious error, and anyone who perpetuates it is a charlatan and a criminal. Good intentions are no excuse. In these three books, Szasz continues, extends and deepens his diatribe, which began in 1961 with *The Myth of Mental Illness*, against what he regards as the abuse of the medical metaphor in our society.

When a doctor examines a patient he is looking at him in terms of whether he is well or ill. What is the matter with him, if anything? If, from this medical point of view, there is something the matter with him, it is because he is suffering from a pathological condition. Physically, mentally, morally, socially, spiritually, it means you are *ill*. If *anything* is the matter with you, whether you are pregnant and are upset about it, or you are about to die and don't like the prospect, or you do not want to go on living, or there is no one at all who wants you around, or you can't think straight, one set of people has the simple and comprehensive answer: you are ill. For instance, para 4 (1) of the British Mental Health Act, 1959, states that:

In this Act 'mental disorder' means mental illness, arrested or incomplete development of mind, psychopathic disorder, and any other disorder or disability of mind; and 'mentally disordered' shall be construed accordingly.

But *all* mental 'disorders' have been psychiatrised. There is not one possible disordered state of mind not covered by a psychiatric name. Every position is some-

where North, South, East or West on the psychiatric compass. Szasz is inflamed with indignation at psychiatry, this metaphorical branch of medicine, which manufactures metaphorical illnesses; that is, phoney illnesses. He insists that the difference between a physical disease and a *psychiatric* disease is the difference between literal and metaphorical, real and unreal, true and false, genuine and fake, being and nonbeing. Just as metaphorically it may be said we are all asleep, so metaphorically some people may be said to have sick minds. Unfortunately, this metaphor has got the contemporary world in its spell.

There is a rich vernacular to describe allegedly disordered states of mind – a person can be daft, round the bend, freaked out, out of his mind, fey, unhinged, have a screw loose, be off the rails, be gone, be past it, be nuts, be crazy, be shattered, be frozen stiff with terror, be bewildered, be confused, be in consternation. Somewhere along the line in the last 150 years all nuances of terror, misery and alleged disorder and evil have been *declared* to be due to mental illnesses, just as bodily disorders are said to be due to physical illnesses. As Szasz says, these were no discoveries: they were a series of declarations. In the last ten years, the desire to take one's life has officially become a mental illness in the USA, and the desire for one's own sex has ceased to be one. However ludicrous all this may be, behind this childish game of metaphorical play lie enormous interests of money and power.

In regarding the desire to live, but not the desire to die, as a legitimate human aspiration, the suicidologist stands Patrick Henry's famous exclamation, 'Give me liberty, or give me death!' on its head. In effect, he says, 'Give him commit-

ment, give him electroshock, give him lobotomy, give him lifelong slavery, but do not let him choose death!'

Szasz indefatigably inveighs against this panmedicalism, this medicalisation of morals, this conversion of desires into diseases, this turning any person into a patient by a doctor's *dictat* against which there is virtually no appeal, and which, once uttered, licenses the utterer, in the name of the taxpayer, to treat (medically of course) the patient almost any way he cares to, for virtually as long as he cares to. He can imprison him, drug him, torture him, cut his brains out or shut them off, entirely at his (the doctor's) own discretion.

Szasz sees this sort of thing as an evil and criminal abuse of human liberty, imprisonment and torture concealed by the metaphor of hospitalisation and treatment. Szasz believes that there are real diseases and that only physical diseases are real. But apart from such real diseases, all ascriptions of pathology to behaviour and experience are metaphorical. You may be daft. That does not mean that *ipso facto* there is something medically the matter, however. Your mind might be filthy, *as it were*, or it might be sick, as it were, but it is not literally filthy, nor is it literally sick. But if I am treated as though I were literally sick when I am not and when I know I am not, then deeply scandalous things are liable to happen.

Szasz condemns the social consequences of this epistemological error. Corruption, he feels, has set in from two sides. On the one hand, no one, not even criminals, should be treated in the ways doctors are licensed to treat patients against their will. On the other hand, undeserving or bad people should not be mollycoddled, *through being treated as ill*, but should simply be left to rot, or be punished. Perhaps this latter side of Szasz's argument is not so well known.

The state does not simply allow a woman to have an abortion as it allows her to take aspirin. It forces the taxpayer to pay for it. Since abortion is now defined as treatment, if a poor woman has an abortion, the taxpayer pays for it. I think that is a grave moral wrong. After all, an abortion is necessary only because a man and a woman have engaged in sexual intercourse – which may be very nice. It is what's called sumptuary behaviour, in fancy language. And so are drinking and smoking. Hence, in my mind, forcing taxpayers to buy abortions for poor women is like forcing taxpayers to buy alcohol or cigarettes for poor men. What mischievous nonsense.

Unfortunately, Szasz has been repeating himself so often, and for so long, that his conclusions, however controversial or tendentious, have become his premises, even axiomatic truths. No hint of uncertainty, mystery, or doubt, or of any problematic clouds his discourse. Rather, he has become a grandmaster in the art of 'of course', 'to be sure', and 'in fact'. Thus 'Facts are, *of course*, stubborn.'

... neurosis is illness-imitative behaviour and the habituation of such faking! That simple idea applies, *of course* – with the slight modification that the behaviour adopted need not be the imitation of bodily illness – to the so-called psychoses as well. [My italics]

and (you have to believe it!) 'The ideas I articulate here are, of course, timeless truths ...'

At the risk of seeming tedious, let me register that a so-called neurosis (a compul-

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sion neurosis) is *not* 'illness-imitative behaviour', that this simple idea is simply wrong, and that it does not apply, as a valid broad generalisation, to the so-called psychoses. Szasz castigates everyone, from Freud to Janov, who wants to help people in distress. He takes me to task for idealising so-called schizophrenics. But I do not think that so-called schizophrenics are better or worse in any sense than the rest of us. He is at pains, however, to dissociate himself from what he regards as the vulgar error he attributes to me of 'idealising insanity as supersan-ity, and mythologising the madman as a person of superior artistic, moral, or psychological gifts, virtues, or powers'.

I have said and written repeatedly that all sorts of people like you and me get diagnosed as psychotic, and among these there are some who are in states of extreme mental distress. I think there is a place for a domain of distinctive concern to do with the nature of relationships between us. It is a perfectly decent activity to seek to cultivate competence in skilful means of helping people whose relations with themselves and others have become an occasion of wretchedness. When a person's suffering becomes insupportable to himself and to others, and yet will not go away, we may fairly say that person is in a state of extreme distress. Most of us, thank God, may sometimes find ourselves in great misery, and yet not be in distress of this order.

Szasz does not confine his insults to psychiatrists. The persons who have become patients (like the pregnant women) are subject to the same sort of abuse.

... allowing incompetent, destructive and self-destructive persons to wallow in their self-contempt and contempt of others will suffice to guide them safely through their journey in the Alps of alienation, after which all will arrive in the neat and clean Swiss village and live happily ever after. Such are the promises of the propagandists for psychiatric research on the one hand, and for anti-psychiatric retreats on the other.

But suppose we *do drop* the medical metaphor. If the rest of us could recognise that what Szasz is propounding are, of course, eternal verities, then psychiatry would disappear, and with it what he calls anti-psychiatry. What exactly would happen next?

In sum, it seems to me that if the ideas I have set forth here, and elsewhere, are valid, and if they gain wider adherence, then psychiatry, as we now know it, would gradually disappear. Specifically involuntary psychiatry, like involuntary servitude, would be abolished, and the various types of voluntary psychiatric interventions would be reclassified and reassessed, each according to its true nature and actual characteristics. Some of these practices might then reemerge as medical interventions, perhaps vis-à-vis persons who do not suffer from demonstrable bodily illnesses - a practice by no means limited to psychiatry. Most psychiatric practices, however, would either disappear or reappear as ethical and political interventions. These psychiatric practices, vis-à-vis voluntary clients, would then be recognised for what I believe they really are, namely, the 'theories' and 'techniques' of - or, better, the justifications for and the applications of - various systems of secular ethics.

It sounds as though it would all be much the same. It makes one wonder what he is making all the fuss about, whether he is not making a sort of fetish out of the medical metaphor, and a scapegoat out of psychiatry. We miss in these books any in-depth analysis of the structures of power and knowledge such as we find

in Foucault and Derrida.

It is a pity about Szasz. He is so insulting and abusive that it is almost embarrassing to find oneself agreeing with him sometimes. As the years have gone by, the important points have become so shrouded in a smoke screen of such garbled dogmatism and arrogance as to be almost inaccessible. He now seems to believe that an insult is an argument, and that his assertions are self-validating proofs of their own truth.

Patricia Craig

A Risen Child

Shirley's Guild by DAVID PRYCE-JONES
Weidenfeld £5.25

For at least a third of his novel David Pryce-Jones is at pains to establish a sense of ordinary, routine life going on in the Welsh Marches, where a landowner worries about the loss of his fields to tenants and buyers, where the subjects of talk are taxation and inflation, where the social occasion is rigid and decorous. In the village there are other families richer in capital or tradition, and in the gate lodge the plodding couple whose dead daughter is transformed into an object of spiritual significance.

Shirley's Guild might have been a ghost story, with the cave haunted by the apparition of a child in grave-clothes, and indeed it starts off in the quiet, detailed and scholarly manner that imparts a special chill to the moments of denouement in the stories of M.R. James. Shirley is not a ghost but a vision: signs are taken for wonders, as T.S. Eliot observed. 'We would see a sign.' Only the unpretentious English setting makes the occasion less lurid than Lourdes, less fatuous than Fatima. It is not the Virgin who appears, complete with all

the paraphernalia of bewitchment and prognostication, but speechless Shirley, a child of no great consequence before her death. She has risen out of the grave with her red hair, and her function is to provide a makeshift outlet for unacknowledged spiritual needs. She is visible only to those who need to see her. For the rest, the emotions aroused are disgust, alarm and exasperation, and the predictable thought that two women, one menopausal, the other in a state of protracted adolescence, are *egging one another on*.

The women are Mrs Humphry, Shirley's elderly mother, and Tina Williams, daughter of the Humphrys' employer and godmother to the dead girl. Tina is neither intense nor deranged; a convent education alone can hardly account for the sudden power to experience the supernatural inflicted on her, although it shows that the affair of Shirley is not without a minor precedent. At the convent, 'a gimcrack holy statue had communicated immensities for which no measurement was known': this is a usual event in an atmosphere of hardihood and quasi-mystical stimulation. The Williamses are not Catholics. Francis Williams, Tina's father, advises his daughter to pull herself together. Her mother takes to her bed, and who can blame her? For her it is the start of a retreat into immobility, permanent invalidism.

Tina's fate is more bizarre, and more ambiguous. A satirist would have made of the final scenes something blacker and funnier, but David Pryce-Jones is writing not in a spirit of comic horror but in a bleaker mood of despondency and pessimism. It's appropriate that the novel ends in a kind of litany, a formal enumeration of the causes of malaise and disaffection in the country. Perhaps the image of the child is made to carry more complex implications than it can well sustain; but the single uncanny factor, the psychic projection, does gain in effect from the inauspicious, matter-of-fact quality of everything that surrounds it. The book is about excesses, desperation, failures of imagination and control but none of these qualities has invaded its style which is assured and fastidious.

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Love & Money

A Marriage of Convenience by TIM JEAL *Hamish Hamilton* £5.95

The Felling of Thawle by GERALDINE HALLS *Constable* £5.95

Two Serious Ladies by JANE BOWLES *Virago* £1.95

Tim Jeal does not merely write historical novels set in Victorian England, he tries to recreate the broad scope and narrative urgency of the genuine article. *A Marriage of Convenience* is set in the 1860s and its plot turns upon just the kind of testamentary complication with which 19th-century fiction was so preoccupied. Clinton Danvers is an aristocratic cavalry officer whose inheritance is locked up in a family trust until he is 30, unless he marries a woman with a dowry of more than £20,000. He also expects to inherit money from an uncle who will leave him nothing if, at any time, he marries a woman with less. Stipulations of this kind give love plots the devious intricacy of the sealed-room murder story, particularly when they are combined with the wilder eccentricities of the English legal system and the Irish Marriage Act of 1746.

Danvers is, of course, in financial difficulty. He does have a suitable heiress hopelessly in love with him. But instead of taking the money he opens the box, a theatre box in this case, and conceives a *grande passion* for a penniless Catholic actress. For reasons of love he marries her, though secretly and in Ireland. For reasons of finance he later invokes the Irish Marriage Act and leaves her. The novel ends with a full dress court scene in which the legal principle is tested to destruction.

The conventions by which Jeal's characters are confined may be arbitrary and out-dated. But the truth is that, for the novelist's purposes, one set of constraints, the obstacles against which character is tested, is generally as good as another.

Tim Jeal's revival of one particular obstacle is especially interesting, and that is money. Of course we still worry about the stuff, and the getting and spending of it continue to occur in novels. But we tend, none the less, to find that perpetual 19th-century concern with the loss or acquisition of unearned income excessive. Yet novelists knew that cash could, in their society, have a genuinely tragic import. The characters in *A Marriage of Convenience*, similarly, don't just worry about money. They are exalted by having it and crushed by its absence; it is a matter of life and death. The consequence is a dramatic intensity hard to achieve in a more modern setting. The welfare state has diminished the domestic novel in the same way that the abolition of capital punishment has dimmed the glamour of the crime story.

The Victorian setting does have drawbacks as well as advantages. There are times when *A Marriage of Convenience* sounds a little like a George Heyer costume drama, and the inevitable comparisons with 19th-century practitioners make one very aware of the book's lack of humour. The concentration is

so firmly on the life of the emotions, moreover, that such side issues as the commercial malpractices of the hero's brother are left unresolved once the love story is concluded. But the novel does imperatively make you want to know what happens next. Three cheers for narrative was my feeling.

Geraldine Halls's *The Felling of Thawle* has a strong simple story too, though it makes a fussy gesture to modernism by splitting the text into innumerable short, and individually titled, chapters. Once again we are in the world of the English aristocracy, now seen in the 20th century and in a state of acute decline. Lady Evelyn de Boissy is dying and Guy, her only son, is mad. Around their stately home the vultures begin to gather. This time they are not lawyers but antique dealers, with their eyes on the Fabergé and the walnut bureau bookcases. Geraldine Halls is married to an antique dealer and her account of the trade is both instructive and amusing. The batty de Boissy family, unfortunately, is a less original creation. I suppose we are meant to respond to the melancholy decline of an aristocratic culture and to sense the tradition of *The Spoils of Poynton*. But the descriptive manner is here often closer to the auction catalogue than the lament. Characters don't just sit down, they settle themselves on 'a solid George II armchair of Virginia walnut, the cabriole legs carved with Indian masks, and upholstered in faded needlework'.

Jane Bowles's *Two Serious Ladies* is a very different kettle of fish. Here style is all and narrative nothing in a novel, first published in 1943, which has been variously compared with Magritte, Lewis Carroll and Ronald Firbank. To me it felt more like Daisy Ashford, the manner of *The Young Visitors* applied to American life in the 1930s. Miss Goering, a wealthy spinster, and Mrs Copperfield, a respectable married lady, both kick over the traces. Events of a dream-like strangeness are described with quaint formality. At times the consequence is a successful epigrammatic humour – Tennessee Williams declared he could not think of a modern novel that seemed more likely to become a classic. I can think of two, even in this particular manner: both by Stevie Smith.

Terry Eagleton

Inspired Hack

George Gissing: Ideology and Fiction by JOHN GOODE *Vision* £6.80

Writing of George Gissing 20 years ago in *Culture and Society*, Raymond Williams interpolated a wry comment about the sheer difficulty of getting hold of his novels at all. It's surely a problem which Gissing himself would have glumly appreciated. Before you can indulge in the esoteric business of critical interpretation you have to lay your hands on the blunt physical object we know as 'book'; and nobody was more aware than Gissing of the dead material weight of that particular commodity, one three-decker version of which a year might just about keep you in the physical shape necessary to churn out the

next. Since Williams's remark, a modest Gissing revival has been under way. A few of the more important novels have become available, and a spate of speed-up in the Gissing branch of the PhD industry has thrown up one finely sensitive study, Adrian Poole's *Gissing in Context*. It's less easy now to patronise Gissing as the poor man's Zola, a self-piteous purveyor of cosmic gloom who took time off from a lot of disreputable, doom-laden stuff to write one respectable novel, *New Grub Street*. Even so, his exact status as a writer remains unclarified; and it's John Goode's purpose to demonstrate why, within the accepted criteria of the literary establishment, that must necessarily be so.

'We might say,' Goode writes with bold disdain for banality, 'that Gissing was Gissing precisely because he was not Dickens.' Gissing wrote as he did because it was no longer possible to take over Dickens's sense of relationship with his public – a relationship which sustains the very forms of Dickensian realism. This doesn't mean, however, that Gissing is just a degenerate Dickens. Gissing *knew* that he wasn't Dickens, and not in the sense that he knew he wasn't the Duke of Wellington. That self-conscious distance from high Victorian realism is incorporated into the very stuff of his fiction, becomes the enabling condition of his art. Dickens writes out of a sense of audience which allows him to finalise plots, portray 'typical' characters, launch ambitious landscapes of the mind; what's fascinating about Gissing is precisely the way in which all this has come apart at the seams. Plots are thwarted, protagonists stripped of typicality, Dickens's imaginative landscapes (not least in the portrayal of London) ruthlessly demystified.

All of which might sound like saying that Gissing is interesting because he's bad. But Goode's case, drawing on the theoretical insights of Walter Benjamin, is that what we see happening with Gissing is a radical shift of terrain from art as 'representation' to art as 'production'. Victorian fiction's confidence in 'representing' reality rests partly on a repression of the problems raised by grasping literature as a specific mode of material production. Gissing wants to repress these too, committed as he is to a hopelessly idealist notion of art; but the very practice of his writing continually betrays him. Try as he might to view literature as transcendental creation, he is driven to produce novels which 'completely expose both the myth of creativity itself, and the class structure on which such myths depend'. If he urged artists to hold themselves sublimely aloof from society, his fiction again and again 'exposes the social mechanisms which determine the life of the mind'.

Goode isn't offering us a crypto-Marxist Gissing. Indeed, in an engaging aside he remarks that his chosen author is one of the most reactionary he knows. What he does offer us, however, is a Gissing considerably more innovative, self-conscious and distinctive than conventional critical judgment will admit. If you make a fetish of 'organic form' in literature, then Gissing, as Goode points out, is so blatantly inorganic as to be unacceptable. If you see that the *whole point* is that he isn't Dickens – that history no longer accommodated such social relations between literary producers and consumers – then it may be possible to rescue him from the status of minor fad, petty-bourgeois upstart or pathological case-history.

Peter Levi

Honey in the Rocks

Talking Poetics from Naropa Institute: Annals of the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics, Vol. II edited by Anne Waldman and Marilyn Webb *Routledge* £3.95

Of Poetry and Poets by RICHARD EBERHART *University of Illinois* £10.50

Welsh Dylan by JOHN ACKERMAN *John Jones* £5.95

Octavio Paz by JASON WILSON *Cambridge* £10.50 and £4.50

Coleridge by KATHERINE COOKE *Routledge* £6.95

There are no complete and comprehensive theories of poetry, and those theories that critics have proposed in this century have been severe and one-sided. They have not extended anyone's understanding very far. Practical criticism is another matter, but even that has become terribly academic; it concentrates on difficulty and complexity, and lets most of the poetry most people like go hang. What is fascinating in the discussion of poetry is usually written by poets, sometimes by biographers, two or three times in a generation by great critics. The poets are more relaxed, wider ranging, more personal and less sure of themselves. I prefer them, but they are hopeless in a way.

The poets in the second volume of *Talking Poetics* are doe-eyed, loving, herbivorous creatures. They totter on the edge of absurdity, and of boredom and pretentiousness. They disport themselves. But for genuine insight into poems and poetry, they are worth their weight in roses. Several of them are extremely funny, most of them are informative, they are often moving. Of course, when one sees the Beat generation and what followed it in America institutionalised as elderly wisdom, when one sees beloved Allen Ginsberg as a father-figure and sage, one muses a little. I had thought in the Fifties that this movement would have seemed by now something extraordinary and irrecoverable, like the moment of Apollinaire. To judge from these writings success may have blurred some of the edges and lives of some of the people, but they are still among the liveliest poets in the world.

I like them for their insistence on the real roots of poetry, in everyday reality and in traditional, simple noises. I find myself pleased by their appetite for paradox, and also by their increasing magnanimity to poets outside their own camp. They have the faults of clever children: they are unholy than thou, and sometimes appallingly earnest. Some of the poets who quote their own verse make one's heart sink, and more than once they set a naively high value on their whole generation. Was it really the best minds of his generation that Allen Ginsberg saw starving, hysterical, naked? One may doubt it. They curiously resemble Matthew Arnold's Scholar Gipsy, whose wisdom or whose search Allen neatly recapitulates.

It's a realisation that there is one common consciousness, and that if only everybody would refer to that consciousness simultaneously there would be some universal cosmic consciousness break-

through – so that everybody at the same time would be the same sublime self.

These are peace-loving, religious people, mostly Buddhists of a kind. Their discipline is the practice of poetry, and on that subject they are constantly interesting. They constitute an entire commune of Scholar Gypsies, a cultural institute of Scholar Gypsy endeavours. Such things are not built to last. What is written becomes a book among other books, what is taught an influence among other influences. But let us hope the Naropa Institute lasts long enough to transform the study of poetry. There is honey in these rocks.

Richard Eberhart is a poet of solid public distinction. He was at Cambridge with Empson, he taught Robert Lowell, and Frost was his friend. His career has been as distinguished as his poetry. He is older than the Naropa poets, and closer to what we recognise in England. If he were British, he might have a knighthood or even the Order of Merit. This does not prevent his being a very good poet and a most interesting writer. But he believes that 'Poetry is in the centre of life', and he calls for an aristocracy of sensibility. 'That would bring to bear the whole personality, its total, potentially rich integration with the world.' Believing as he does, he can hardly demand less. This is not quite the voice of Naropa. He makes a more moving and a fuller statement in an essay on book collecting.

Great poems are at the centre of life. We feel their truth and they abide with us. I would end on the note of love and say that the love of collecting books of poetry through the years is part of the love of life, our inexplicable master, part of our attempt to grasp the mystery of life in which we find ourselves, bound as we are to time with time running out, and that poetry, like religion, embraces our deepest feelings as we embrace it in turn with the unique feelings which it engenders, which can be expressed in no other way but in the poem itself.

He is putting it very high. And yet the statement is so guarded as to be almost circular once you admit that poetry is in the centre of life. For a moment allow that to be true, at least for poets. Still what we want as readers is the consequences, which ramify into details

and anecdotes. Here Richard Eberhart is abundantly generous. His essays on other poets are thrilling and nearly as revealing about his subjects as they are about himself. I am not able to resist a few plums. Yeats to Gogarty about Baldwin in 1928: 'Gogarty, he has studied politics as you and I have never studied poetry.' Auden teaching at St. Mark's School in spring of 1939: 'He was always picking books up off the floor to read or to refer to, which seemed strange and un-American. He was writing his early poems and would change a line on the instant if you suggested it and what you suggested seemed better.' There is a charming vignette of T.S. and Valerie Eliot holding hands through a long social evening. Richard Eberhart rather misses the point of this story, just as he badly underestimates Eliot's last lyric poem. He is desperate to escape from Eliot's overwhelming intellectual shadow. One can understand that.

At the same time, it shows how carefully we should treat the testimony of poets, even about poetry, and even as social observers of other poets. They are so terribly subjective. Allen Ginsberg is the only witness to the vision he had of William Blake, but that is not part of the history of poetry, even of his own. Richard Eberhart on Dylan Thomas is a more difficult case. Anyone interested knows enough about Dylan Thomas in America by now to fill in whatever is missing, but what seems to me the misunderstanding shown in this account is startling. I never knew Dylan Thomas; perhaps that is why I find it extraordinary that Richard Eberhart should be so whimsically tolerant, so completely respectful, so charmed and so awed. He does express some need to reserve the whole truth; I wish he had written it. And yet these few pages as they stand do strangely illuminate both the poets, and make them both more likeable.

Are all the enthusiasms of poets injudicious? They range far beyond what a commonsense critic will tolerate, and they often take a lot of understanding. They can be contorted, ingrowing and passionate, or gleeful like a game. The Welsh background of Dylan Thomas, for example, is not at all the whole truth about him, only part of that truth. Now we have it pinned down with photographs of provincial architecture and provincial faces in *Welsh Dylan*, a shortened and enriched version of a 1964 publication. I am not able to feel that this pleasant memoir has much that is new and worthwhile to offer to the history of poetry. In the Rimbaud of Cwmdonkin Drive, the Rimbaud element has somehow eluded

THE MACHO WEAKNESS OF BLACK POWER

In her controversial book, *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*, (a Platform Book, £5.95 & £2.50) Michele Wallace (a Harlem born black feminist) argues that the black leadership of the 60's made a fatal mistake in defining itself in sexual rather than political and economic terms. Equating power with manhood, they created a black macho mystique that was largely insensitive to the needs of women and children. A penetrating analysis.

OTHER PLATFORM BOOKS

Robert Jungk's far-seeing book, *The Nuclear State* (£5.95 & £2.95) forces us to confront all the consequences of opting for nuclear power – particularly those for our civil liberties. Civil liberties, too, is the major concern of *Policing the Police* (Vol. 1 £6.95 & £2.95), edited by Peter Hain, with analyses of the new police complaints system by Derek Humphry and of the Prevention of Terrorism Act by Brian Rose-Smith.



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NEW FICTION BY BECKETT, BROSKY, BURROUGHS, GALLOWAY AND HOYLE

David Galloway's *Lamar Ransom-Private Eye* (£5.95) turns the world of Philip Marlowe on its head in a witty parody of Chandler, with a beautiful lesbian gumshoe, a newspaper magnate not dissimilar to Howard Hughes and a full supporting cast! *Detour* (£7.95) by Michael Brodsky (second prize in the Hemingway Award) explores the tortuous detours of behaviour and language needed for growing up in post-hippy, post-Vietnam, post-Watergate America. Trevor Hoyle's *The Man Who Travelled on Motorways* (£5.95) presents an obsessive, shifting narrative of a man trying to retain some grasp on reality, continually undermined by the fantasy world of his uncontrollable imagination. At seventy-three Samuel Beckett is still a major creative force in contemporary literature – his latest text is *All Strange Away* (4.50) William Burroughs, godfather of the 'Beat' movement has two new texts published *The Third Mind* (illus, £5.95) and *Cobble Stone Gardens*, a short novel in *New Writing and Writers* 16 (£4.95 & £2.50).

John Ackerman as, in another way, it eluded Richard Eberhart. However you rate his poetry, this being probably the wrong time to rate it at all, the truth about Dylan Thomas is complicated, and raises some difficult questions about all modern poetry. Critics agree that Thomas is not quite the central figure he once seemed to be. But to suggest who is central and who is not involves redefining the modern movement.

That might look easy in Naropa; it has its complexities in Great Turnstile. Maybe Apollinaire, by no means the greatest modern poet, was central to something. Maybe surrealism was important. Not a single great poet was a wholehearted surrealist, and yet in its outer fringes and remote transformations, that movement has surely inspired great works. Octavio Paz is a serious, excellent poet, at least the equivalent of Eberhart. His gravity and humour, and the sea-change of Latin American Spanish, have created in him an artist who profited more deeply and more freely than Dylan Thomas did from European ideas. Once again, he is not quite central, but what a gifted, intelligent, enlivening writer.

Jason Wilson's work on Octavio Paz and surrealism reads like an academic thesis. It is saved from being unreadable by the quotations. Searching among my books for more relief of the same kind, I find to my horror that I possess no book by Octavio Paz. That is probably a good argument that some sort of critical exercise was necessary. But why must one submit to the atmosphere of lecture halls when one is hungry for a new poet? Even within my own academic subject, which is dead languages, I prefer the old-fashioned scholars whose lifework was to see a text well printed to the new ones who talk about literature. Three pages from Naropa are worth a volume of such writings. Paz himself in a poem puts this better.

No sé nada
Sé lo que sobra No lo que basta
La ignorancia es ardua como la belleza
un día sabré menos y abriré los ojos.

(I know nothing. I know what is superfluous. Not what is enough. Ignorance is arduous like beauty; one day I shall know less and open my eyes.)

Is that romantic? Does it recall an early poem by Yeats? But what all these poets have in common, the moral momentum of their poetry, does go back beyond surrealism and beyond the modern movement in literature, to the romantic impetus of the 1800s. Wordsworth wrote against pollution by railway trains, and Coleridge tried to found the first American commune. Shelley wore white jean trousers. Octavio Paz is immediately acceptable to Europeans because his pre-suppositions and his techniques are not strange to us. The originality, the individuality, the nutty personal flavour of poetry, and the meshing of one memorable voice with the tones of the language, have little to do with 'poetics', and less with academic criticism.

We have even an academic study of Coleridge that makes little of his poetry. Perhaps that is an unfair remark because this is a level, learned survey of his whole vast output, and it shows Coleridge as coherent. But the problem with Coleridge is to separate the thunderstorms and the lightning flashes from his perpetual drizzle. He needs a longer book, with chapters of drizzle set aside from the fits of extraordinary insight. He needs a first-class literary biography, of which this book, which

seems reliable, is the merest sketch. Such a biography would help us in our turn to know where we stand. Richard Eberhart says that 'Poetry is a natural energy resource of our country. It has no energy crisis.' That must surely be untrue.

Ken Coates

Crumbs of Life

The Working Class in the Labour Market by
R. M. BLACKBURN and MICHAEL MANN
Macmillan £12 and £5.95

How much control does a worker have over his job, and over his choice of jobs? How far can he learn new skills in the work he does? Does he find what he has to do worthwhile? What kind of influence does his job have over his own picture of himself in society?

In pursuit of answers to these and other questions, R. M. Blackburn and Michael Mann went off to Peterborough to inquire. Their elegantly-built survey looks at the shape of the labour market and some of the mentalities it has produced in 951 men who earn their livings in a wide range of jobs: from foundry workers at Baker-Perkins to machine-minders at Combex plastics; from brickburners at London Brick to road gangers for the Council. Nine separate employers gave facilities to the investigation, which reached people doing 275 different named jobs. All of them were invited to answer 46 different queries, many of which were detailed and involved several subordinate issues.

The outcome is a formidable one: Blackburn and Mann have put figures and, sometimes, a set of vivid details to Ruskin's still resounding heart-cry:

We have much studied and perfected, of late, the great civilised invention of the division of labour; only we give it a false name. It is not, truly speaking, the labour that is divided; but the men: divided into mere segments of men – broken into small fragments and crumbs of life; so that all the little piece of intelligence that is left in a man is not enough to make a pin, or a nail, but exhausts itself in making the point of a pin, or the head of a nail. Now it is a good and desirable thing, truly, to make many pins in a day; but if we could only see with what crystal sand their points were polished – sand of human soul, much to be magnified before it can be discerned for what it is – we should think there might be some loss in it also. And the great cry that rises from all our manufacturing cities, louder than the furnace blast, is all in very deed for this – that we manufacture everything there except men; we blanch cotton, and strengthen steel, and refine sugar, and shape pottery; but to brighten, to strengthen, to refine or to form a single living spirit, never enters into our estimate of advantages.

The numbers frighten: 'we estimate that in Peterborough about 85 per cent of the workers possess the necessary ability to undertake 95 per cent of the jobs', while 87 per cent of the jobs demand no more skill than is involved in driving to work. 'The time taken as a learner-driver is longer than is the learning period of nearly all our jobs.' Once caught in

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their particular ruts, these workers find that only extremely limited promotion prospects offer themselves, as rewards, normally, for years of long and obedient service.

We conclude . . . that 'ability' as conventionally understood is of little significance in determining the differential economic destinies of the bulk of the working class. Length of service and co-operative attitudes are more likely to be rewarded – eventually – with a more interesting and skilful job.

Although managements talk a lot about the 'quality' of workers, what they tend to mean is not cleverness, nor dexterity, but reliable conformity.

For the 13 per cent of highly skilled workers whose jobs took longer to learn than it takes to win a driving licence, things are different. But for the men of this book, choice is minimal. Jobs are allocated with more whimsy than concern. Advertisements will announce a rate of pay, shift commitments and maybe fringe benefits which are applicable: but normally an applicant 'will learn nothing about the content of the job, the actual wages and hours, the promotion prospects, or the degree of autonomy, until he starts to work there'.

Hardly surprisingly, workers caught in such an environment will commonly respond like red-headed Fred, whose mop was frequently seen by the authors of this study as they cat-walked their way over one workshop along a gang-plank from the bosses' office. The managers had tried to 'expand' or 'rotate' Fred's job, which he had effectively resisted. 'How can you reform industry with workers like that?' asked one of them. 'What he had correctly perceived', comment our researchers, 'was that Fred was giving as much of himself (i.e. virtually nil) to this firm as he wanted to.'

With this insight, Blackburn and Mann move from what they reasonably describe as a Weberian focus of inquiry (identifying the mix of skills, strata and status distinctions within a given labour market) to a 'quasi-Marxist conclusion' that it is possible to humanise Fred's conditions only by abolishing the entire relationship of wage-labour. Such a conclusion puts them off lesser prescriptions, like those of the Bullock Report, or even 'complete workers' control' so long as insecurity remains a present experience.

It is obvious that this book is an important contribution to a key argument. At the same time, I doubt whether Fred will derive much help from it: not that its authors are necessarily wrong to deride the fashionable nostrums of job-restructuring, but because the nub of all these problems is (as they themselves understand) in the words of the limerick, who does what, and with which, and to whom? It seems to me that even mistakes made by a shop stewards' committee in tackling such issues may well have a quality which is more encouraging than the best successes of an enlightened management: do-it-yourself is the only possible prescription. To the extent that workpeople come to feel that they can take any initiative for themselves, they begin to meet Ruskin's standing reproach. 'To refine a single living spirit' is a work for that spirit itself, in whatever associations it needs to form in order to further its own growth. 'Bring out number, weight and measure in a year of dearth', said Blake. The statistics of Blackburn and Mann will help the present moral dearth to be recognised, and for that much thanks.

Marxism and Aesthetics

James Fenton Replies to Robin Blackburn

Robin Blackburn has every reason to feel annoyed with my review of Walter Benjamin and the New Left Books volume *Aesthetics and Politics* (NS 25 May). This was sent to me by Blackburn, with the request that I might give it some publicity. I sat on it for over a year, and then wrote that I found much of its contents repulsive. Moral: do not request publicity from reviewers who 'invariably prefer a belletristic sneer, which colludes with the prejudices of the public, to any challenging discussion of ideas'.

I shall not pretend to despise Blackburn in the way he affects to scorn me. On the contrary, I have every respect for him and his work, although precious little for this latest effort. I did not argue that Benjamin, Brecht and Lukács should be 'condemned as unfit for human consumption'. I argued that Benjamin's politics should be taken seriously if we are to take his thought seriously. And when he argues that 'only he who, by decision, has made his dialectical peace with the world can grasp the concrete', whereas those who wish to decide 'on the basis of the facts' will find no basis in facts, I find this language and reasoning so similar to that which lay behind the dishonesties of the Thirties as to be deeply disturbing. Particularly so in an author who uses his words carefully.

As far as Lukács is concerned, I find his contribution to the *Aesthetics and Politics* volume quite revolting, but so, I think, does Blackburn. It was, after all, pretty tough on Expressionism in its old age to find itself hounded by the Nazis as degenerate, and by the Communists as leading to Fascism. One major poet (Benn) made his peace with the Third Reich, and one great Expressionist painter (Nolde) had in fact been a member of the Nazi party. That Nolde was subsequently actually forbidden to paint tells us something about the relationship between Expressionism and Fascism. Brecht and Lukács 'did accommodate, albeit uneasily, to Stalinist cultural policy', says Blackburn. I should have thought that Lukács helped form that policy – however much he redeemed himself in later years.

In any case, as Benjamin's account makes clear, Lukács put the wind up Brecht and drove him to compose his self-defence, from which I quoted. That the self-defence should contain two crucial definitions ('popular' and 'realistic') which effectively hand over the artistic message to party decision shows surrender, not accommodation, to Stalinist cultural policy. Blackburn says that the legacy of Brecht is an inspiration to the socialist opposition in East Germany. But that is only a small part of the story. Brecht is also the proudest cultural possession of the state, is he not? The first thing you see at Checkpoint Charlie is a Brecht poem on the wall. One does not find quotations from Solzhenitsyn in Moscow airport.

The feigned innocence of Blackburn on this point is, I must say, outdone by John Willett (NS 15 June) in his article on Brecht's attitude to Stalin. Willett points out that Brecht's reputation for Stalinism is based very much on the play *The Measures Taken*, which he describes as 'a powerful cantata-like work

expounding the need not merely for ruthless disciplinary measures in extreme situations but also for their voluntary acceptance by the victims, up to and including death'. This work has been interpreted 'in isolation from the music' – although what difference the music would make is never explained.

'Powerful' and 'cantata-like'? I should describe *The Measures Taken* as a brutal hymn to Juggernaut, which seems to have been sired by Beria out of Arthur Waley. It is certainly an explicit work: it celebrates the negation of the personality in the cause of the party. The immensely contrived plot shows revolutionary betrayal as essentially a human characteristic. What the good Party member must on no account be is – human. Quite why the erring comrade, in the supposed rush at the end, has to be asked to agree to being shot and thrown into the lime-pit, is not explained. But clearly it is considered a useful thing to have the kind of comrade who can view his own death as essential to the cause. After the error of humanity, redemption through destruction. Willett and Blackburn no doubt have stronger stomachs than mine. I cannot take this stuff. It represents the absolute zero of artistic effort, the art that celebrates its own annihilation. And what I was trying to say in my article is that there is something in Marxism itself (not in Stalinism, in Marxism) which tends fatally in this direction. Marxism is never disinterested. We were always taught this as Marxists. Our researches and our writings must have a goal and purpose. They must have issue in action or demands for action. They must be effective.

I wrote my article in considerable anger, and this was a mistake. But the anger was genuine, and was quite the opposite of self-congratulation. It arose from the following perception. When I joined the revolutionary movement ten years ago, I was determined that as far as poetry was concerned, I was not going to put what talents I might possess at the service of the cause, become a jobbing-poet, a *Gebrauchsliriker* for the revolution. Poetry was one thing, revolutionary work another.

Indeed I thought that membership of such a group would ease rather than increase the pressure from politics on one's art. (It did not do so, of course. What happened instead was that a little censor took up residence in the home, and could be heard every evening chirping in the hearth.) The perception that made me angry was: the Marxist who feels this way about his own art is hardly in a strong position to recommend to anybody else that they turn over whatever might be most valuable to them to the service of the revolution. One is entitled to accuse him of using his revolutionary work as a kind of protection money – I'll sell your paper if you keep your hands off my poems. There was always an alternative of course – to follow the example of Brecht, or the British writers of the Thirties, in revolutionary art. But I have never admired Auden as a revolutionary (or Stalinist, as Blackburn may imagine). I admire him as a poet, and I generally find more in his later poetry than his earlier work. As for Brecht, *pfui Teufel!* I am now convinced that art must

be prepared to spit in the face of Marxism if it is to survive. Is this what Blackburn would consider a challenging idea?

Edward Mendelson writes: A week after demolishing the myth of Brecht's Stalinist poems, the NS gave a few lines to a similar myth about Auden. 'Unlike such non-Marxist fellow travellers as Auden', writes Robin Blackburn, 'Benjamin was quite estranged from "official communism" throughout the Thirties.' Auden never had anything to do with 'official communism', and unlike Benjamin never said anything about the Soviet Union being 'an indispensable resource in the struggle against fascism and imperialism'. He endorsed Marxist theories of society, yet he never wrote even a line in support of Soviet actions or policies, either directly or indirectly; and his essays included warnings against revolutions imposed from above.

He did praise Lenin once – for sharing certain personal characteristics with Lawrence of Arabia. And he did mention the Communist Party once. It was in a pseudonymous note on surrealist art, where, in the course of raising questions about surrealist claims to revolutionary virtue, he observed that in Marxist and Freudian theories 'There is a rough and ready parallelism between the Conscious and the Unconscious, and the Masses and the Communist Party'. This doesn't say very much for the Party.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

John Coleman

Tripping Up

Hair (AA) *Dominion*

Love at First Bite (AA) *ABC, Shaftesbury Avenue; Classic, Haymarket; Studio, Oxford Street; Scene*

Allegro Non Troppo (A) *Screen on the Green from 22 July*

Butch and Sundance: The Early Days (A) *Leicester Square Theatre*

The Spaceman and King Arthur (U) *Odeon, St. Martin's Lane*

Arabian Adventure (U) *Warner West End; Classic, Oxford Street; ABCs Bayswater, Fulham and Edgware Roads*

By one of those appalling ironies that confound complacency, my esteemed colleague Benedict Nightingale has let me down. His 1968 review of the American 'tribal musical' is explicit: 'If there's anything obviously wrong with *Hair*, it is, after all, that it's trapped behind the proscenium arch.' And there was I, who had never seen the theatrical event, confidently emerging from Milos Forman's big-screen, two-hour version of the same to propose the exact reverse – that the loose materials on display must surely have been more jack-in-the-box effective simply because of the relatively cramping and claustrophobic limitations of a stage, that spreading out all that wild and would-be infectious song and dance over several real landscapes (ranging from Central Park through Long Island to California) had surely meant a disastrous dilution, spent forces.

There is, of course, a simpler, crueller reason for *Hair*, the movie, however long on tresses, being so short on charm. Time has lurched on a decade and nothing dates so quickly as yesterday's excesses, particularly the drop-out, acid-dropping, flower-powdering, begging-bowl hedonism celebrated by Gerome Ragni, James Rado and Galt MacDermot. It seems a wicked stroke of fortune, in retrospect, that led the brilliant Czech exile into this Circean trap, 'the first thing I met when I arrived in America in 1967'. When one thinks of the quick, satiric yet heartfelt mastery of Forman's first transatlantic films, *Taking Off* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (due reservations made for the latter), it is painful to see this great talent squandering itself on a nostalgic exercise, an uncritical 'trip' down memory lane.

For *Hair* positively invites us to applaud a collection of king-sized creeps, ruled over by a smiley phallic symbol called Berger (Treat Williams), who – in an augmented story-line – determinedly show a good time to a farm boy from Oklahoma on a couple of days' spree in New York before induction for Vietnam. It's symptomatic of the outcome that one found oneself willing this nice, clean-cut lad, Claude (John Savage), to tell Berger and company where to shove their LSD and arrogant, easy, taking ways. That Berger should end up emplaned for that war by mistake and, in an epilogue of awful simplesse, under a grave-

stone was fine by me: it was not supposed to be. Forman and his excellent photographer Miroslav Ondricek offer lyric, idyllic, somehow grateful images of America – a misty rural opening, a leafy Central Park, a time under rainy arches, a drug-dream sequence with some splendid aerial dancing – and a handful of the songs, where audible, retain a small, catchy potency ('Aquarius' itself and the contrasting 'Black Boys' and 'White Boys' numbers). Shutting the mind to the prevailing moral weather permits incidental pleasures: dancing police horses, a montage of boot-camp training. The key, though, is the ineffable Berger, handing over a society girl, saccharine-sweet Sheila (Beverly D'Angelo), to Claude as if she were somehow *in his gift*; commandeering a car; gate-crashing a wetly caricatural nob's party and prancing on a long dining table bawling 'I Got Life'. Some judges would have given him the chair.

For authentic, gritty, essentially New York Jewish humour, the sidewalk, smart-ass kind that is sick and not sickening, turn with relief to Robert Kaufman's script for Stan Dragoti's *Love at First Bite*. (Kaufman also wrote *Harry and Walter Go to New York*, which goes to prove that showbiz is a lottery.) The premise here is that Count Vladimir Dracula (George Hamilton excellent as a youngish Stewart Grainger), together with his bug-eating slave Renfield (magnificent little Arte Johnson, of those TV 'Laugh-In' shows), has been turfed out of Transylvania by the Central Committee to make way for trampolines and Nadia Comaneci. First discovered tickling the ivories against a chorus of wolves – 'Sh!' he remonstrates, and then, 'Children of the night, shut up!' – Vladimir is soon batting around Harlem and discos on the trail of wacky Cindy Sondheim (Susan Saint James), a bad-mouthed, pill-happy fashion model. Richard Benjamin deploys his best super-smug beam as her unfortunate lover-cum-analyst. Mr Johnson's solicitude is touching: 'If you're hungry, master, we could send for the night maid', and he is not above enjoying his own jokes, like this – 'Heh. Heh. Heh. Heh'. The pair visit a blood bank, to make a withdrawal; Cindy goes for the jugular bit; the close discovers Benjamin and Dick Shawn as a bemused cop genially competing for Dracula's status-enhancing black cape while two bats wing out to sea. It might be nearly as comical as a radio happening, but who cares with laughter in the dark at a premium?

At which juncture, some rapid word-eating is in order. Bruno Bozzetto's *Allegro Non Troppo* had me suggesting after a viewing at the 1976 London Film Festival that TV should 'grab it for Christmas'. And buried it, I should have added. At second sight, this ill-conceived send-up of *Fantasia*, combining live action and animation and now abominably dubbed, is mostly heavy, vulgar and here and there downright unsavoury. The live portions concern an orchestra of abused old ladies,

carted to a concert as if from a concentration camp; they get ladles of swill at refreshment-break, while the gross Conductor and smarmy Director eat in style; a zany Cartoonist is unchained to draw the animated snatches and fall for a cleaning girl. Debussy, Dvorak, Ravel, Sibelius, Vivaldi and Stravinsky get the treatment, or treatments. Of slight technical interest is a mixed-media episode with a cute bee and giant humanesque lovers; there are a couple of inspired flashes when the Cartoonist scrumples his moving sketches to death; Sibelius's 'Valse Triste', which has a moping black cat remembering a derelict house back into life, is the one unqualified success and might well be shown on its own. In the same bill, Joan Micklin Silver's entertaining *Between the Lines* is revived.

Philip French has already put the boot into some publicist's infelicitous proposal of *Butch and Sundance: The Early Days* as a 'prequel', to which let me add my clog's-worth. The movie, Dick Lester's first Western, is genial, relaxed, and rather goes on till it stops. It looks enticing, featuring snowscapes and wonderful confectionery rock formations (a change from rock groups, after all), and has – in Tom Berenger as Butch Cassidy and William Katt as the Kid – cunningly chosen replacements for Newman and Redford. As is fitting, this one indulges in a bit more history: how Robert Leroy Parker and Harry Longabaugh got their *noms de guerre*; pursuit by a straw-hatted Pinkerton man; Butch's itchy desire for fame, to the extent of giving a prospective hold-up hobo five hundred dollars to recall him. The old man says, 'Right, Dutch'. There is a well-mounted saloon brawl, guns spraying, and a climactic train robbery, with the 'calvary' outwitted dream-fashion and at length. 'Sooner or later someone's going to get us,' Butch opines, as they ride off into the last freeze frame. Thanks to the more famous freeze of George Roy Hill's, we have to bow to the truth of this. Allan Burns's script, however, tucks in a few too many rough male chuckles, as well as a learning-to-ski sequence that parallels the bike choreography of the original film, to make us credit it. They're just playing outlaws, for all the improved sense of background.

School's out – and so is a pair of 'U'-certificated movies for the toddlers. (All the so-called children I know appear to exist on, and care only for, 'X'-fodder: there must be a travelling market in stilts and high heels.) Russ Mayberry's *The Spaceman and King Arthur* turns out to be just the ticket, such are time's strange reversals, for me and my friends. Vestigially inspired by the Mark Twain classic, it despatches astronaut Tom Trimble (Dennis Dugan, a thinner Roy Castle) by error and spacecraft Stardust back to 'the year of Our Lord, five hundred eight', as comely, baby-voiced Alisande (Sheila White), a peasant lass clutching a gander she calls father, announced to Tom. Kenneth More is the engaging king, John LeMesurier, Rodney Bewes, Jim Dale and Ron Moody as a bad Merlin are in professional attendance, and there is a sound line in dryish, throwaway humour. To complicate matters that essential fraction, there is a robot double of Tom, whom dopey Alisande favours over his maker (seamless trick photography) until the very end. The robot it is who suffers in a merry joust with evil Sir Mordred (Mr Dale). The gadgetry – magnets, a laser gun, a flying ejector seat – is adequate, the battle cosily

stationed between plausibility and wild slapstick, and (to repeat) there is the inspired silliness of the gander-girl. 'Mum died of the plague three years past,' she explains early on and much later, resolutely confused as ever, she has to know as she flies through the air with Tom, 'Are you taking me to your nest?' Don Tait wrote the piece.

Directed by Kevin Connor and produced by John Dark, *Arabian Adventure* bores for old Baghdad, whence comes a speak-your weight

Prince Hasan (Oliver Tobias) to win the hand of Alquazar of Jadur's stepdaughter Zuleira (Emma Samms, yum yum). Christopher Lee is fiendish Alquazar; a cut-price Sabu (pretty, grave-faced Puneet Sira) and his monkey help sort things out at moments of crisis; Mickey Rooney cackles and scurries as the engineer i/c a trio of fire-breathing metal monsters. The monsters and a sky-fight between squadrons of flying carpets are plusses. The rest non-plusses.

film about Molière showed him reaching out from under Louis XIV's censorship towards *le peuple*. Mnouchkine wants to work in the spirit and styles of *théâtre populaire*, not simply advocate theatre for the people.

Théâtre populaire, the image of accessible and non-bourgeois theatre which has coloured the thinking and work of the leaders of France's public-funded theatre (Jean Vilar, Roger Planchon and many less celebrated *animateurs* of the national network of theatres) has reached artistic, political and ideological crossroads. Right-wing pressure at central and local level since 1968 has removed many talented people and cut funds. After 20 years' populist audience-building, workers still compose less than 5 per cent of theatre-goers.

And the theatre-folk themselves, for years preoccupied with social evangelism and *mise-en-scène* aimed at stripping the dramatic heritage of 'bourgeois' accretions, have woken up to the French theatre's most conspicuous lack: native plays. The current playwrighting revival is a bit like a child finding its feet. After decades of fine writing (Giraudoux, Cocteau), thesis plays (Sartre), custom-built cynicism (late Anouilh) or metaphysical probing (the Absurdists), French playwrights are now essaying some of drama's basic tasks: retrieving their country's history and realistically describing the present.

The acclaim for Jean-Claude Grumberg's *L'Atelier* (The Workshop) this season was both symptomatic and deserved. Set in a men's-wear workshop between 1945 and 1952, with a scrupulously naturalistic set, its buttonhole-making and steam-ironing would not be out of place in an early Wesker play. It tells the story of Simone, one of five seamstresses. She's Jewish, like the workshop's ancestrally resigned boss, and her husband was deported in 1943. The play follows her attempts to track down what happened to him. Her odyssey through displaced persons offices staffed by a racist French bureaucracy hit the audience hard, as did the reticent realism of the writing and production by Jacques Rosner. *L'Atelier* is like a French version of a good Royal Court play; but there hasn't been a Royal Court in the French cultural republic.

The shift towards playwrighting can also be seen in the recent work of the French theatre's greatest talent, Roger Planchon. Planchon's directional intelligence and theatre appetite lit up an *Antony and Cleopatra* set in Twenties Cinecittà and a fantastically childlike *Pericles* this season. But he has also written ten plays, including a series of dramas with a peasant viewpoint (he comes from the Ardèche) set in medieval times, under the 1871 Commune, and in today's pauperised provinces; in addition, he has written spectacular Aristophanic romances about futurist television, space-travel, a celestial Chicago gangland. Planchon is beginning to look like a modern Molière who singlehandedly has dusted down French drama, reviving genres and opening up new territory. Other authors – Loleh Bellon, with her delicate studies of women and perceptive pictures of actors backstage, Jean-Paul Wenzel, with his 'new objectivity' portraits of the old and the unemployed, Michel Vinaver, with his ironic view of French business and the multinationals – are bringing new realities on to the French stage. 'The most modern thing one can do in theatre now is to speak of the world of today,' says Jacques Rosner.

French Theatre

Michael Kustow

Images of Weimar

Vincennes, on the eastern edge of Paris, sports a zoo, the chateau in which Sade was once incarcerated, and the Cartoucherie, a former ammunition factory which was handed over to a number of theatre groups in 1969. This was no mere act of benevolence by France's Ministry of Culture. Shaken by the 1968 occupation of the Odeon Theatre and the radicalisation of many public-funded theatres, the Ministry wanted somewhere to tuck them away. Appropriately, it's there that Ariane Mnouchkine's Théâtre du Soleil is staging a fine four-hour play about art and *le pouvoir*, adapted from Klaus Mann's novel *Mephisto* which reflects many current dilemmas of the French stage through the prism of Weimar and Nazi Germany.

Mephisto, published in 1936, is a *roman à clef* of German literary and theatrical figures in the decade from Hitler's abortive 1923 putsch to the Nazi electoral victory. Mnouchkine's characters are made closer to their historical originals: Thomas Mann and his children Klaus and Erika, the actress Carola Neher (one of Brecht's mistresses, killed in Stalin's purges), the cultivated playwright Carl Sternheim, his demagogic rival Hanns Johst, and above all, actors – Hanns Otto, who abandoned middle-class theatre for agit-prop cabaret and Gustav Grundgens (Henrik in the play), a mightily talented star who continued his acclaimed Faust under the Third Reich, and was put in charge of all German theatre under the Nazis.

Along two walls of the Cartoucherie is a gigantic fresco of an idealised Germany – romantic seashores, golden harvests, noble Prussian warriors. Two stages facing each other across the hangar symbolise the opposing theatres – and worlds – of Weimar Hamburg. One consists of chandeliers and bourgeois red velvet, the other, sparse and folksy, belongs to the working class. A clown-act about family welfare under inflation, played in the style of the popular Munich comic Carl Valentin, is countered by a titivating girls' dorm scene from a boulevard sex-exploitation comedy. You make the changes yourself, by standing up and swinging the back-rest of your bench over to face the other way – environment as image of a split society.

Through the androgynous, reptilian presence of Gérard Hardy's Henrik, Mnouchkine examines the necessarily volatile centre of any great actor's creativity. Henrik's masochism and passivity, umbilically joined to his talent,

lead him not only into the arms of bisexual Erika, but ultimately to the Nazis. On the cabaret-stage, another kind of difficulty is exposed: how to give political analysis theatrical flesh and blood. By showing the political cabaret-scenes in rehearsal state only, Mnouchkine is saying that the problem of effective people's theatre, which has been such a concern in France, is still unresolved. And by cutting each turn short by the announcement of some political event, she's reminding agitpropniks how fragile theatre is in the wind of history.

Private and public lives intertwine, and nothing stays black and white. A young actor in Henrik's theatre joins the Nazi party in the Twenties because they promise an end to the people's exploitation. Henrik fires him, out of radical chic conviction. When the Nazis take power he's re-engaged, though once more it's for his political record, not his acting skill. Then his rage pours out at his new masters, an outburst both political and professional: 'The Jews have left, but capitalism's still there! The Jewish judges are out, but the law still exploits the poor! You misdirected our anger!'

Using a rich mixture of theatrical devices, Mnouchkine shows the jaws of Fascism closing around liberals and militants alike. The Mann family quote *The Cherry Orchard* to each other, and the farewell to a Russian estate becomes an elegy for Weimar Germany. The Communist cabaret-actors go underground, or, like Carola Neher, flee to Moscow despite the purges. A new Nazi theatre director announces ambiguously, 'Art can only thrive in the service of the people and its revolution'. A Jewish director and his actress wife climb a railway parapet and jump. Brownshirts in the wings cluster round a defiant violinist. In Berlin, Henrik pays off his black mistress, triumphs as Faust, gets a telegram from the Führer.

Mnouchkine reflects on the dangers of over-aestheticism, the ambiguities of 'people's art', the temptations of mixing with government, and the difficulties of making political popular theatre. A vision of such theatre has suffused many of the shows this vigorous woman in her mid-forties has staged. Her chronicle of the French Revolution, *1789* (a triumph when it came to the Roundhouse), looked at rulers and ruled through the eyes of fairground entertainers. Later she dealt with migrant workers from North Africa by using *commedia dell'arte* street skills, and her recent

Sport

Russell Davies

Rags to Riches

In the course of his commentary at the Edgbaston Test, Jim Laker ruefully remarked of a passing incident that he dared say it would be written up in somebody's book before the week was out. Laker himself did not scorn extra-mural activities in his day – I have here a still from an old film called 'The Final Test', wherein Jim's is the background face chosen to represent Mingled Despair And Hope In The Dressing Room as, in the foreground, paunchy but noble veteran batsman Jack 'Evening All' Warner stiffens his lip and prepares to stride out to the middle.

But in the matter of books, Laker has a point. There is no shortage. On an averagely dull day of county cricket, you can look round the field and happily wager that there's at least as much authorship as sportsmanship going on. Soon there'll be scarcely a capped player who isn't lined up for an early appointment with his ghost writer. Together they will tap out the drama:

By the third day at Swansea, my gangrenous big toe was ready to drop off, and I had just been out hit wicket for the fifth time in succession. I felt I had hit rock bottom. But no; just then, Wilf Wooller came over and said . . .

Part boast, part miserere, part laundry list, the modern cricketing memoir is a form offering, as estate agents say, 'improvement opportunities'.

If I claim that Mike Brearley's *The Ashes Retained* (Hodder & Stoughton £5.95, published yesterday) puts new life in the genre, sharp-eyed readers of the book will doubtless accuse me of giving way to flattery – and I will not deny that the Captain's friendly reference to this column turned my so-called 'acid pen' momentarily alkaline. But even now that the 'litmus (no relation to Fred Litmus) has returned to its accustomed scarlet, I cannot find it in my heart to call the book of Brearley (and Dudley Doust) anything but a good read. As a man who has maintained his position almost exclusively through tactical astuteness and man-management, Brearley necessarily knows what he's talking about, and is able to recreate satisfactorily the thought processes that lead to his decisions.

In Australia these, as we know, proved almost monotonously right; yet there is quite enough adversity in the book to prevent its becoming a gloat. For one thing, there's Brearley's own batting form, which, having attracted advice (on p.70 alone) from Willis, Benaud, Close, Bedser, Hutton, Dexter, Robin Marlar, and Willis's hypnotist, Dr Jackson, finally produced for him 184 runs in 12 Test innings. Whatever is wrong, the chief symptom of it has got to be the movement of Brearley's bat before the delivery. To me, the exaggerated lift – which cannot possibly be relevant to every ball – looks like the alibi of a man cursed with under-mobility of the feet. But it is probably too late all round for

anything to be done with this strange technique. In any case, things seem to go better when Brearley makes his customary early exit. In the Prudential Final, where he and Boycott became intoxicated by the fact of their survival against the hottest attack in the world, the 'base' of the innings spread so far that there was no time for a superstructure to be built up on it.

Brearley is a harder man – more Yorkshire – than he looks. Before the start of the Australian series, he was happy with Botham's motivation because of the 'macabre dreams' which 'The Gorilla' was then having, in which he bowled (wish-fulfillingly) at the head of Ian Chappell which 'would slowly split open'. Later on, when the series was going almost too well, it was the attitude of Jardine (retailed by Larwood) that appealed to Brearley. 'We've got them down, Harold', Jardine said, 'Now we'll tread on them.' (A version of this remark has now been attributed to every sportsperson I know, except John Curry.) Brearley's game is painstakingly based on the exploitation of the opposition's weaknesses, one by one. He will accept any suggestions that seem likely to expose these. Much of the thronging jollity that marks dismissals obtained by England consists, I suspect, of variations on 'What did I tell you?'

At the same time, Brearley puts his own men's needs first; and his feelings for them in one case (Boycott's) run to the sentimental:

As I stood at the non-striker's end, I felt a wave of admiration for my partner, wiry, slight, dedicated, a lonely man doing a lonely job all these years. What was it that compelled him to prove himself again and again among his peers?

It even rhymes. Myself, I should have thought the answer had something to do with the waves of admiration. If ever the day comes when old Boycs gets all the waves of admiration he needs, we'll be able to cook steaks on him.

Interspersed with Brearley's first-person narrative – which incidentally features a valuably balanced account of the pros and cons of a typically ghastly and unbearable Packer night match – are a few chapters independently produced by Dudley Doust, one of which is a remarkable attempt to recreate the feelings involved in one man's long hot innings: Randall's 150 in the Fourth Test at Sydney. For once, the stream-of-consciousness stuff here rings true, since Randall's on-field monologue is by all accounts memorably repetitive and not at all interior. 'Come on, Rags. Get stuck in. Don't take any chances. Get forward, *get forward*' he can be heard rabbiting as he lurches about, hitching up this and pulling down those. The most annoying of opponents on these grounds alone, Randall in Australia evidently made an extra nuisance of himself by taunting bowlers, begging needless fly-repellent from the umpires, and fussing minutely over sight-screen adjustments. Somehow, the gamesmanship and sheer eccentricity combined with the standard ingredients of cricketing heroism – sweat, blisters, cups of tea – to produce a surprisingly vivid record of this achievement. An achievement Randall should repeat more often (lest he begin dangerously to think of himself, as crowds already do, chiefly as a star-turn fieldsman with diminished responsibility for batting. It can't *all* be left to Gower). Meanwhile, let's hope the Indians give us all a bit more to write books about in the present series than they have so far.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Git Away

Dogg's Hamlet and **Cahoot's Macbeth** by TOM STOPPARD *Collegiate Theatre, WC2*

Prometheus by the LIVING THEATRE *Round House*

Reggae Britannia by LEIGH JACKSON *Royal Court*

Of the two Stoppards that launch the British-American Repertory Company into a choppy theatrical sea, one is an elaboration of a minor curiosity called *Dogg's Our Pet*, and the other fresh evidence that its author is becoming a sort of one-man Amnesty International, with a special interest in his native Czechoslovakia. Little need be said about the first, except that it interjects a comically compressed version of *Hamlet* into the whimsical series of verbal jokes that Ed Berman, who directs the current proceedings, has presented with some success elsewhere. 'Cretinous git', says a boy to his headmaster, who nods in gracious acknowledgment. 'Sod the pudding club', smiles a great lady as she hands out the school prizes. Over the interval drinks a jealous rumour spread among my fellow-critics, to the effect that the BBC was in possession of the phrase-book that would explain all; but it hardly seemed worth debagging anyone in hopes of finding it. Anyone who knows his W.S. Gilbert or *Monty Python* should recognise the sounds of topsyturveydom when he hears them: nothing is what it says, much means the exact opposite.

Cahoot's Macbeth is meatier stuff, though it begins with a characteristic Stoppard joke and follows it with plenty more. Three witches circle a smoking pot in the reddish murk, and salute two noblemen with spears; and then up go the lights, and we're actually and oddly in someone's living room. Macbeth turns out to be the well-known Czech actor Pavel Landovsky, and everyone else a member of the suitcase-theatre that has recently been performing abbreviated classics in Prague houses and tenements, more auspicious auditoria having been refused them by the neo-Stalinists presently in power. Before long it is time for the Porter scene. There are three or four enormous bangs on the door, which then crashes open to reveal a smirking lackey in a belted raincoat who proceeds to needle and threaten everyone present. Noting that the intellectuals watching the performance, like those giving it, are actually employed as janitors, cleaners and the like, he congratulates Landovsky on having 'cracked the problem of the working-class audience'. Reminded of the nominal protection his nation's laws give to human rights, he points out that 'a lot of water has passed through the penal code' since Dubcek. Crack follows crack, most of them funny, all of them malicious. We laugh and feel uncomfortable, as Stoppard, who by now has little left to learn about the uses of humour, presumably means us to do.

Unluckily, this burst of didactic comedy is soon over. The secret policeman, who is Peter Woodthorpe at his silky-snarkiest, makes a

temporary exit; Landovsky, played by Stephen D. Newman, continues to demonstrate the political relevance of *Macbeth* in Husak-territory; then in wanders a character from Stoppard's first play, who proceeds to hail everyone as 'cretinous git' and so on; and the evening begins to look badly in need of the *Python* military-man who used to interrupt his team's more harum-scarum efforts with the regimental bark, 'Stop, stop, this is getting silly'.

To be fair, there is some point to the nuthouse lingo, which now starts to infect Landovsky's company, bewilder those who are bugging their performance, and enrage the returning cop. It is meant, I think, to suggest that the authorities will always find it difficult to suppress resourceful imaginations, wits and tongues, even if they put their whole nation behind the chunky grey bars that Mr Woodthorpe ends the play frantically and symbolically constructing. But the evening as a whole leaves a sketchier, more fragmented, and finally less eloquent impression than what I take to be Stoppard's most successful foray into committed hilarity, the TV play *Professional Foul*. Both are about usurpation and the abuse of power, not unlike *Macbeth* itself; but it is the one that ignores, not the one that explicitly invokes, that parallel which comes the nearer to justifying it.

Ten years ago London chic came in its thousands to the Round House to be berated, browbeaten and blessed by those high-priests of romantic anarchism, the Living Theatre. 'Holy hair, holy nose, holy moustache,' they intoned then as they laid their hands on my quivering head. Last week the company was back, still griping and beseeching in that adenoidal wail which, though faces change, continues to characterise its collective voice-box. 'It's been going on for ten thousand years,' its moving spirit, Julian Beck, bawled at those of the faithful or curious who thinly straggled the stalls. 'I am pleading for a solution.' 'Closed boxes, forbidden sensations, closed doors,' a naked gentleman, carrying a tray of objects meant to symbolise those things, roared at my colleague Milton Shulman, who reacted with all the night-time joie-de-vivre of his namesake, Milton Keynes. The message was the same as at the end of that blithe, undemanding decade, the 1960s. Only we perhaps were different.

Prometheus, bringer of fire, clambers on to the scaffolding that straddles the stage, and glumly watches the passing parade: masked doctors carrying a human brain; figures on stilts, also symbolising knowledge, with geometric constructs over their pates; and Aeschylus's Io, noisily pursued by a humanoid gadfly, symbolising suffering. 'This is not my true form, I am not an animal, challenge the order of this ritual,' implores the cow-princess, and disappears with a squawk of 'I wanna go home'. There then follows a long picture of the birth of the Soviet state, which is duly accused of promising liberation and delivering oppression. The more enthusiastic members of the audience mime the storming of the Winter Palace; Kronstadt is remembered and mourned; a figure plastered with Christmas lights prances through the dark, presumably to dramatise Lenin's uneasy relationship with Eros, Dionysus, or whoever; Lenin himself snaps, 'Free speech? Free speech is a bourgeois luxury'; and Prometheus mooches off in a sulk, announcing he's giving up Russia as a bad job.

By that time much of the audience had made a similar decision, and the barest few joined the cast at what it declared to be the evening's denouement, a vigil outside Holloway jail. I dutifully made the trip too, but arrived too late to see anything except a few backs drifting away from still-inviolable gates, having got myself snarled in every traffic maze in north London: a predicament that summed up many of my objections to the Living Theatre itself. The existence of mazes, knots, dilemmas is beyond the grasp of its sub-Shelleyan rhetoric. If the company retained the imaginative verve, the visual audacity of an earlier era, one might feel more inclined to overlook its intellectual wetness; but that's by no means the case. Rather, its members have reduced themselves both in style and content to Simple Simons in a world of predatory piemen, too guileless to appreciate the full complexity of the Tufnell Park one-way system, let alone cope with the practical demands of nuclear proliferation, hunger, torture, racialism, pollution, energy, Rhodesia, Ulster, Czechoslovakia, and all the other intractable agonies of the upside-down, inside-out planet in which most of us realise we're doomed to live.

Finally, a word about the latest piece of sociology at the Court – or should I say a word *above* it? The 'reggae' of the title is very loud, and some of its players' accents are hard to penetrate, since they're Rastafarians trapped in the English Babylon and incomprehensible out of cultural conviction. The question is, should their band seek commercial success or project a rebellious, aggressive identity; but the evidence and the characterisation is too thin for the answer to absorb those of us not directly involved in what, this being the second play about Rastas in three weeks, is clearly an issue of import in the black community. Best performers: Debby Bishop, William Vanderpuye, and, for the whites, Brian Hayes.

Television

Gillian Wilce

Hot Spots

'If you wouldn't tell Stalin don't tell anyone,' said the notice-board in rather homely lettering. But the inhabitants of Southern Utah don't actually find their neighbourhood atomic testing ground (the subject of the notice) homely, especially since the incidence of cancer among them rose sharply. The main thread of the American film *Paul Jacobs and the Nuclear Gang* (BBC-2) was a series of interviews with cancer victims – ex-army men and nuclear power workers as well as people from Southern Utah – by Paul Jacobs, himself gauntly dying of a cancer which he attributed to his investigation of nuclear 'hot spots'. But the most blood-curdling moment came during an old US government propaganda film of soldiers practising for the next world war by being exposed to real nuclear explosions. 'The

Julian Barnes will be back next week.

army has taken all the necessary precautions to see that we are perfectly safe here,' an army chaplain reassured a nervous participant, adding that the explosion would be 'a wonderful sight to behold' with all the 'rich colours of the rainbow'. What the soldiers actually beheld, as they crouched in their fox-holes or simply turned to the hillside and hid their eyes, was every bone in their hands, clearly visible in the flash.

The US government may be technically correct to argue that a four-and-a-half times the average rate of death from leukemia among certain nuclear workers is not scientific proof that the radiation is the cause of the cancer. You would, however, expect it to inspire any averagely humane government to a frantic search for the truth. Instead, one saw only foot-shuffling, issue-dodging lack of concern expressed by complacent state officials.

'They're turning us into robots already,' was a comment, not from the US army, but from one of the Portsmouth naval field-gunners whose training for the Royal Tournament was the subject of *The Wooldridge View* (BBC-2). Interviews and voice-over commentary were judiciously mixed with events which spoke for themselves – in slow motion when required to show the swift details of the sweating, straining effort to trim a few more seconds off the time it took to assemble the lethally heavy gun. The men were trained by physical battering ('Keep working those legs', hollered the trainer at a marine staggering bent-legged across a bog with a sandbag on his shoulders) and by humiliation (wooden Oscars were publicly awarded to men who let the team down). Wives and families were utterly peripheral: as one obsessive gunner put it, 'She's had the alternatives. There's her mother in Scotland.' A cheerful field-gunner told how he nicked his mate's accidentally amputated finger as a souvenir and didn't let on even when the MO wanted it to sew back.

And yet, one began to understand what it felt like to stake everything on membership of the team – if only that 'box of human spares', the B team; what it felt like to achieve a perfectly co-ordinated, time-logging run and finally to arrive in the sawdust and gunpowder of the arena. 'Once that blue light goes on', a sailor explained of a good performance '... the 18 of you are one.' The only jarring notes came at the end. First there was a lapse into the worst sort of sports-commentatorese when the defeated trainer on his way back to the dressing-room was described as being 'on the walk that is as great a test of character ...'. Then there was the extraordinary concluding statement: 'This was a tribute not an advertisement.' It was patently neither; it was an entirely absorbing picture of a way of life which stirred ever-widening circles of ques-

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tions – about authority and brutalisation, about aggression and physical achievement, about discipline, sport, pageantry . . .

If *Paul Jacobs and the Nuclear Gang* was the documentary as polemic, and *The Woolridge View* was the documentary as documentary, *The Year of the Prophet* (Thames) tended, disappointingly, towards the documentary as educational lecture. There was enough material in it for several programmes and the attempt to say too much at once led to over-abrupt transitions and a resultant feeling that *less* had been said than might have been. There was too much telling and not enough showing. Silent film of Muslims, in private and in public, at devotions and at riotous assemblies, was accompanied by Vanya Kewley's slightly school-marmy recounting of basic facts about Islam and recent political developments. Her triple crown of interviews, however – with the heads of state of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan and the foreign minister of Iran – neatly summed up aspects of Islamic rule in the persons of powerful, soft-voiced men with small, dark moustaches, who smiled and smiled. General Zia's smile, in particular, grew ever deeper and flashier as he assured Ms Kewley that he knew what was best for Pakistan and that his conscience was 200 per cent clear about having to introduce a few necessary 'stringent measures' like even more power for the army and hand-severing as a punishment.

Radio

Peter Porter

Wordplay

It will be interesting to see whether Ian McIntyre's plans for increasing the wordplay of Radio 3 make much difference in practice. Restoration of cuts has come to be spoken of in so many departments of life as the beginning of a Golden Age that it is worth reminding oneself how much will have to be given back before we recover the old Third Programme. Still, the promise is a generous one: perhaps the most welcome of his intended changes is the emphasis on literature, in the form of more short stories, a monthly magazine programme, *The Republic of Letters*, and a programme about the media.

If something can be done for books, most listeners will be pleased. *Kaleidoscope* (Radio 4) and *Critics' Forum* (Radio 3) treat them seriously, but can give them only a small proportion of the allotted time. The rest of the magazine programmes, which sometimes bring an author into the studio or get a panel to discuss a new book, tend to reduce the issue to celebrity chat. I have never understood why radio cannot have the equivalent of the book review page of a paper. Mr McIntyre's intention of making a play, a feature or a documentary the chief item of some Radio 3 evenings is also welcome, though I would prefer a gentle redistribution of the speech-to-music content throughout the whole day, rather than devoting the daylight hours to music and keeping the burden of words for the evening.

There has been a foretaste of the increased interest in fiction on Radio 3 lately. A number

of original short stories have been broadcast, sometimes read by their authors, and classics by Chekhov, Mishima and others have come to us in actors' readings. Writers of fiction should be encouraged to read their own stories, as has long been the custom with poets reading their verse. One who does it brilliantly is Frederic Raphael, whose recent performances (they were much more than just readings) of two stories of sex and marriage among the professional and publishing classes in London were the most attention-summoning things I have heard for a long time. I suspect that Raphael's commanding way with his material made me value the stories more highly than I should have done. There were twists and Maugham-like stings in them, which might have seemed cheap if not couched in his seductive delivery. I felt the same about *The Daedalus Dimension* (Radio 3), a literary-cultural fantasy, narrated by Raphael and performed by a highly accomplished cast of actors, headed by the immaculate Norman Rodway.

What was it about? An Englishman in Crete, his American mistress, King Minos, Minos's son, forbidden to leap bulls like less protected lads, the city of Athens, which gets no stars in the Minoan Guide Book, Theseus, Ariadne and Michael Ayrton – for starters. It was really about Raphael's power as a phrasemaker, and that is a sometime thing. I can do no better than quote three lines which I noted down during five minutes of the action – 'sky as blue and un-surprising as a cliché'; 'to offer matutinal libations' (to piss); 'the partridge boy was gay as a bird'. The artist was the hero and he is supposed to care for nothing but his work. The script was heavy with aphorisms and untruths. But it wasn't dull, and Raphael's narration sparkled. The actors glowed. The Ancient world did not get any closer, but nor did it in Raphael's translation of Catullus or his recent TV *Oresteia*. Anachronism requires more judicious handling.

A voice as perfect as Raphael's belongs to Richard Briers and he has been bestowing it upon us with great liberality, I was delighted by his reading of *A Musical Ramble* (Radio 3), a dozen programmes selected from an account of travels in Germany and Austria in the 1820s, by the English music critic Edward Holmes. City after city came to life, as Briers relished each of Holmes's perfect vignettes of coarseness and aspiration in the musically advanced but socially barbarous marches of Metternich's Europe. Briers also played All-wit in that splendidly inventive farce by Middleton, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (also Radio 3), and carried unction and dishonesty to great heights. Rodway was in this play, too. We are fortunate in our radio actors. The play was advertised as being 'dramatised for radio' by Peter Barnes. I listened away from my copy of Middleton, and noticed nothing impertinent, so perhaps the phrase meant no more than chosen to be performed over the air. While on voices, I should like to register the spry-self-satisfaction of Roy Strong's five-minute monologues on Sunday morning, *Strong Points* (Radio 3). Strong has the gift of embodying vocally the qualities he is deprecating intellectually, and it is enjoyable to follow him into the world of men's fashions, and the present popularity of the fine arts (or their merchandising) with upper-middle-class Emmas and Carolines.

Poetry, too, has been casting a spell of

eloquence. Laurence Lerner has been playing poetics with the notion of computers for some years, and his latest programme *A.R.T.H.U.R. and M.A.R.T.H.A.* (Radio 3) brought his disruptive wit to a nice climax. There is a marriage between the Automatic Record Tabulator but Heuristically Unreliable Reasoner and the Modular Automatic Real Time Harmonic Activator, arranged by their programmer, and, in the nature of even simulated passions, it leads to Automatic Digital Upward Low Tension Electronic Randomised Yes. Lerner is clever but he understands pain, and these jokey poems end up highly poignant. The voices of Simon Jones and Rosalind Knight were subjected to the simplest distortions by the electronic modulator, and Fraser Steel, producing, kept every syllable clear. This was the real stuff of radio experiment, the chief innovating agent being Lerner's imagination.

Weekend Competition

No 2575

Set by P. W. R. Foot

Extracts, please, from Dylan Thomas's *Pride and Prejudice* or Jane Austen's *Under Milk Wood*. Maximum 150 words, by 3 August.

Result of No 2572 Set by E. O. Parrott

We asked for famous locals on arts festivals.

Report

By George Bryon

Kipling on Glyndebourne proved the most popular subject. There were some pleasing Crabbes, a few very Scottish Burnses and one or two Bellocs. Marks for ingenuity to Robert Gittings (see below) and to John T. Swift for his James Joyce on the Dublin Horse Show (no room to include it, but a token £2 to him). A handy nine quid to the winners.

*Thomas Hardy Considers the Latest
Dorchester Hardy Festival*

Faring Wessexwards, coming to Casterbridge,
festival-tinted,
I mused on the moilings of man, and, pursuing
the scrimmage,
Discerned that its subject was Me, each
shop-window imprinted
With my superscription and image.

Whilom in the Corn Exchange amateur
thespians prinked them
In smock-frock and gown, dialoguing my books
by conjecture,
And no less than a Lord (David Cecil by name as
they thought them)
In Casterbridge Church lipped a lecture

(Albeit inaudible) praising my past reputation
'Spite of modern detractors, who spoke me as
mean, parsimonious,
Wife-neglectful, e'en snobbish; but he in his
noble oration
Confounded misprision erroneous,

Glorifying Me. Yet it irked me to see all
those splendid
Colonial dollars and Nipponese yen
there unrocketing
My bank account. Yea, these my royalties,
copyrights, ended,
My pennyworths plumping base pocketing!

T. H.'s Note – St. Matt. xxii, 19-20. 'And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?'

ROBERT GITTINGS

For music wot is serious, in a country-'ouse
wot's jolly,
The 'ighbrow opera-lovers wiv a fair
amount o' lolly
Come dahn each year to Glyndebourne – and it
really beats the band,
'Cos the opera's in a lingo few of 'em
can understand.

Oh it's 'Cozy Fanny Tooty' every season
by request,
But it's 'Knocked 'Em In The Old Kent Road' that
Tommy loves the best.

They sits there gawping in the stalls, like they was
in a trance,
While the bloke 'oo is conductin' seems to 'ave St
Vitus Dance,
'Arf-time they ups and takes a break wiv Fortnum
& Mason 'ampers,
An' 'as a nosh-up on the grass: cold chicken,
chocs and champers.

The stars is mostly Ityes (they know wot it's
all abaht),
The ladies 'ave 'uge bosoms, as big as all get-aht,
Wot wiv kissin', shootin' and stabbin', them
operas is 'ot stuff,
An' you need an aht-size bosom, so you don't run
short o' puff.

As fer 'Cozy Fanny Tooty' an' all that lah-di-dah,
Says Tommy, they can stick the 'ole thing up
their repertwhar.
STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

What ironies the hand of fate contrives!
I, chronicling the rude, unlettered lives
Of this gaunt sea-town's simple denizens –
Harsh lives too often passed in putrid dens
Of vice and famine – could not then foresee
How Music's high harmonious alchemy
Would starkly etch and yet endear, in time's
Slow lapse, the saddest of my
creatures – GRIMES.

The Opera of GRIMES built BRITTEN's name.
And BRITTEN built the Festival. Its fame
May thus be traced to luckless PETER's doom;
Yet here today there would be scanty room
For such as shambling, speechless

GRIMES among
The rich, assured and voluble who throng
The BOROUGH's dark, enduring streets,
or dwell
In spacious comfort at the BRUDENELL ...
SIMON LITTIMER



Tony Miles Chess

No 141

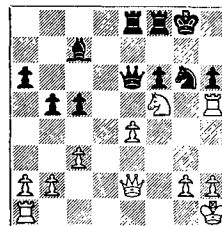
One interesting aspect of the Vidmar Memorial tournament was the presence of a sizeable delegation from China. Their star player Chi Ching Hsuan took part in the tournament, and though his result was not particularly good, he showed great fighting spirit, drawing only one game, and scoring a fine win over Larsen.

The player that stole the limelight, though, was a young girl, one Lui Shi Lan. She looked about 14, but turned out to be 17 and the Chinese women's champion. On learning that my wife was quite a strong player she eagerly asked to play some training games. Jana politely agreed, and a series of ten minute games was arranged. Hardly expecting any real competition from an unknown teenager, Jana didn't take the first few games too seriously and was a couple of points down before it became apparent that this was no walkover. Even when she began to take the game seriously the young Chinese girl still held her own. Whilst it would be rash to draw any great conclusions from ten minute games it is clear that Liu has an exceptionally quick eye for tactics and, more surprisingly, an excellent feeling for position, far beyond her years and non-existent international experience.

Unfortunately I do not have the score of any of her games, so this week's game is my own piece of disruption to Anglo-Chinese detente:-

White: Chi Ching Hsuan Black: A J Miles
1.P-K4, P-QB4; 2.N-KB3, P-Q3; 3.P-Q4, PxP;
4.NxP, N-KB3; 5.N-QB3, P-KN3; 6.B-K3, B-N2;
7.P-B3, 0-0; 8.Q-Q2, N-B3; 9.B-QB4, B-Q2; 10.P-KR4, R-B1; 11.B-N3, P-KR4; 12.0-0-0, N-K4;
13.B-R6, BxB; 14.QxB, RxN; 15.PxR, Q-B2; 16.P-N4!? QxP; 17.K-N1, P-R4; 18.P-R3?! Up to here nothing original. It's all occurred before in Somebody-Soltis (bad memory for detail) and Janosevic-Mestel Birmingham '75. Previously played was 18.PxP, P-R5; 19.PxP, PxP; 20.BPxP etc. Mestel told me that it is a forced draw. I don't quite remember why, but he knows about these things. (Chi incidentally, didn't, so I was already an hour ahead on the clock.) 18... P-R5; 19.B-R2, R-R1?! 19... QxRP was good for Black, but I thought that the text, threatening R-R3-N3ch just won. Now Chi's tactical flair really becomes appar-

ent. 20.P-N5! 20.PxP was much too slow. 20... N-K1; If ... R-N3; 21.PxN, R-N3ch; 22.B-N3, PxP; 23.Q-Q2 is fine for White, and on 20... NxP!? either 21.PxN, R-R3; 22.BxPch! or 21.R-Q3! 21.N-B5! BxN; Not 21... PxN; 22.P-N6 22.PxB, R-R3; 23.PxP, R-N3ch; 24.K-B1!! This was the resource I overlooked on move 19. I had observed that it left most of White's position en prise with check: Q-K6xRPxBPxR etc, but failed to appreciate that I still had no win. I thought that 24.B-N3 was forced when ... RxBch! 25.PxB, BPxP and the threats to the WK and WQ should win completely. Chi now had 7 or 8 minutes left to reach move 40; I had an hour or so more. I spent all but 15 minutes of it convincing myself that the position was completely drawn. 24... Q-K6; 25.R-Q2, QxPch; 26.K-Q1, QxPch; 27.K-B1! Now 27... Q-R6ch; 28.K-Q1, Q-B6ch would be a fine logical end to a sporting contest as the Russians like to say. However, I didn't feel like a fine logical end so relying on his time trouble, I took the sort of gamble one should normally reserve for five-minute games, weekend swisses, the British Championship and that sort of thing. 27... Q-R6ch; 28.K-Q1, R-N8ch; 29.BxR, Q-B6ch; 30.K-B1, NxP?!! There was still a perpetual with Q-R6ch. At this point the hitherto inscrutable oriental became decidedly flustered. After all, isn't Black almost two rooks down? Sweat poured from his brow and he seemed to almost slip off his chair – all the more so after 31.R(2)-Q1?? Of course not R(1)-Q1 Q-R6mate, but on 31.R-K1, though Black can confuse matters with ... Q-R6ch; 32.K-Q1, Q-N7; 33.K-K2, Q-B6 (or N-B5) objectively White must be winning. 31... Q-K6ch. And now White is lost. 32.R-Q2; If 32.K-N2, P-R6ch; 33.K-R2, Q-B6 and Q-N7 mate. 32... Q-R6ch; 33.K-Q1, Q-B6ch; 34.K-B1, QxRch; 35.R-Q1, Q-B6; 36.B-R2, P-K3; 37.R-Q3, Q-B5ch; 38.K-N2, N-N2; 39.P-B3, QxRP; 40.R-B3, Q-K5; 41.R-B6, Q-K7ch; 42.K-R3, Q-QB7; 43.P-B4, N-K4; 44.P-N6, N-Pch; 45.BxN, Q-B6ch; 46.KxP, QxBch; Resigns.



Solution to Problem 139

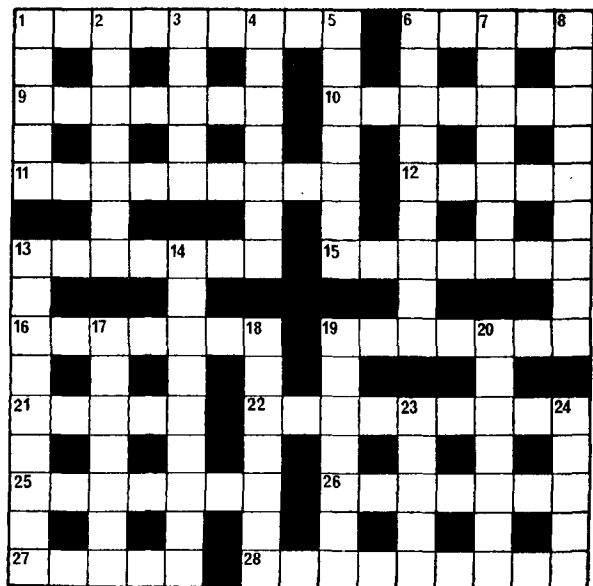
1.R-R6, QxB (If Q-B1; 2.RxPch! and Q-R5 mate)
2.RxPch, KxR; (K-N1, PxQ) 3.Q-R5ch, K-N1;
4.QxRch and 5.PxQ, wins.

Problem 141

White to play. How should the game go?
Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 1 August.

Weekend Crossword 1310

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1310, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 31 July.



ACROSS

- 1 Fine spells save wheat being spoilt (9).
- 6 Vagrant married when in confinement (5).
- 9 It travels behind and shows what is coming (7).
- 10 He fiddles and finds it difficult to save (7).
- 11 Country which is the fairest in the East (9).
- 12 The navigator would come soon if he lost heart (5).
- 13 Opera made to run smoothly if produced back to front (7).
- 15 Fruit for great lady (7).
- 16 Casual worker of the right? (7).
- 19 Flourish when there is food for the supporter (7).
- 21 Bar given in refusing others permission (5).
- 22 The creature could make hot warmer (9).
- 25 Poet with a feminine strain (7).
- 26 The tail in one transformed into the beginning (7).

DOWN

- 27 Magistrate concerned with first offender (5).
- 28 Garments which need gathering (9).
- 1 Two males upset (3,2).
- 2 Helped when adult is involved with a devil (7).
- 3 The place is dispirited (5).
- 4 I turn green from giddiness (7).
- 5 Nurses who may be found in penniless distress (7).
- 6 The saint and I go into the lake for cover (9).
- 7 Famous courtesan gives a dance in the Orient (7).
- 8 Boy holding a periodic payment for paternity (9).
- 13 Seaman about to steal from admiral (9).
- 14 The most foolish however (9).
- 17 Being wooden it makes fire get out of control (7).
- 18 Performs with relatives in animal covering (7).
- 19 Agriculture in remote historical period (7).

- 20 Poison one strangely has to cat in company (7).
- 23 Raise one among many (5).
- 24 Means to grinding of masses (5).

SET SQUARE

Solution to No. 1308



Prizewinners to No. 1308

Richard Curtin (Bremen)
Valerie Jukes (Liverpool)
J. C. Ballard (Shepperton)

APPOINTMENTS



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The successful applicant must be available for work from 1 September 1979.

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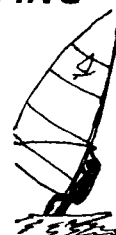
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